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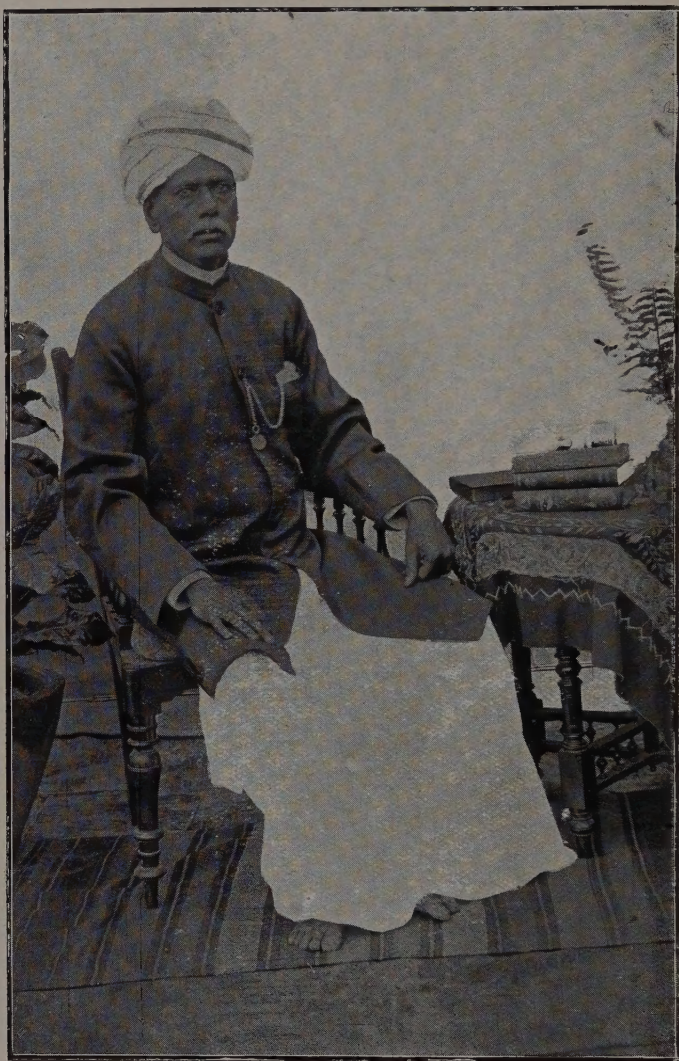
DEWAN BAHADUR A. S. APPASAMY



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Fifty Years' Pilgrimage of a Convert



DEWAN BAHADUR A. S. APPASAMY PILLAI

Fifty Years' Pilgrimage of a Convert

BY

DEWAN BAHADUR A. S. APPASAMY PILLAI

*Retired District Court Pleader, Inamdar and Mittadar, Manorama,
Palamcottah.*

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WITH A FOREWORD

BY

THE RT. REV. E. H. M. WALLER

The Bishop of Madras

AND

A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF SOME LEADING
CONVERTS TO CHRISTIANITY

BY

THE HON'BLE JUSTICE MR. M. D. DEVADOSS

Judge, High Court, Madras

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY

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NOTE

I WOULD like to acknowledge here my indebtedness to my son, Paul Appasamy, M.A., LL.B. (Cantab.), Judge, City Civil Court, Madras, for the invaluable assistance he has found time, in the midst of his pressing duties, to render me in the preparation of this book.

A. S. A.

FOREWORD

I AM very glad to have the privilege of writing a 'foreword' to Dewan Bahadur Appaswami's most instructive book. After reading the story of his conversion, I urged him to complete the narrative by an account of his Christian experiences and he has now done so.

There are many things in it which will be of deep interest and great profit to readers both in England and India. People in England, who are deeply interested in the conversion of the world, cannot get any true idea of the struggles which are involved in the re-adjustment of a life commenced outside Christianity to the principles of Christ. Here we have an account of one such life, told with the rich spiritual experience gained by fifty years of effort and meditation.

Again, whenever a Church arises in a country with an old philosophical religion it passes through two initial stages. There is first the stage of separation, when all that went before is condemned and banished from thought and life. In the next stage, men begin to discover that there was much valuable truth in the old writings and beliefs of the country. God had not left Himself without a witness, and in every age and in every religion men had received truth from Him. The Early Church gathered much of permanent value from Greek philosophies and Eastern and Greek Mysteries. We accept quite naturally a Christian theology,

based on the work of Clement of Alexandria and Origen, as part of our Christian heritage. But we do not realize the boldness of these men in exploring the works of Plato and Aristotle, of Philo and the Stoics in order to enrich Christian thought.

When men rise up in these modern days to do the same work for their religion and their country, there are some who shake their heads and fear that 'simple Christianity is losing its hold.' Of course there may be, there have been, extravagances in every age. But the man, who all unconsciously bases his thought about the Word of God, and on Plato's searchings into the heart of truth, need not fear the researches of earnest Christians like the Dewan Bahadur into the truths contained in the old religions of India. Rather, he should be thankful that they are presented to him from the pen of a Christian mystic who is also a leader in all good works. And that brings me to another point. There is a feverish and often hysterical search now-a-days on the part of Christian missionaries and supporters of Missions to find the point of contact between East and West. The search is often futile, sometimes foolish. But it is inevitable that, as new generations arise and are occupied with the supreme desire for true self-expression, there should be a conflict of ideals. In this book those who have eyes may discover the true point of contact—Christ and Christ alone. It is not in matters of eating and drinking, habits of life, or conscious research into 'Indian points of view' that we shall find the way. It is in Christ alone that East and West meet.

Probably the reader will say that this is a platitude which leads us nowhere. True. I will be more explicit therefore. The truths discovered by Dewan Bahadur Appaswami in his researches into Hinduism are all, I think, in the region of what is called mysticism, the life which sees the Real symbolized in the Seen and interprets what is seen as symbolical of what is Unseen. This is not a prerogative of the East alone. It is the common heritage of all Christians. The Rao Sahib quotes from German mystics of the fourteenth century to illustrate his discoveries in Hindu mysticism. He might equally well have gone for his illustrations to the Cambridge Platonists, or any another Western exponent of the life hidden with Christ in God.

East and West meet in mysticism, the realization of the unseen God. The new missionary pondering how he should present the truth to India will find guidance in this book. The days are gone when it was enough to learn the stories of gods and goddesses and ridicule them: (was it ever enough?) or when it was thought without reflection that teaching appropriate for the street preacher in a Western town, was ample for an Eastern audience. The storehouse of the Christian teacher must be stocked, as Christ said, with things new and old. It is not like the medicine chest of a quack, containing a purgative mixture and one 'sovereign remedy.' God revealed Himself in diverse manners and the preacher must humbly follow Him in his methods. This book contains the ripe experience of many years of preaching to Hindus and that experience should be studied.

For this record of the progress of a Christian, for a vision of truths hidden in the heart of an ancient people, for guidance in presenting Christ to those who do not know Him, for this glimpse of a soul that has penetrated within the veil, we reverently thank God.

E. H. M. WALLER,
Bishop in Tinnevelly and Madura.

December 30, 1921.

PREFACE

I will mention the lovingkindness of the Lord and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed upon us. Isa. lxiii. 7.

TWO years ago I ventured to publish a small book entitled *My Conversion* which dealt with the earlier portion of my life and the influences and events that led up to my baptism as a Christian. That it was a genuine and unvarnished account of a real experience, typical of the experiences of many other converts as good as or better than myself, must account for the ready welcome with which it has been received in India and elsewhere.

For the benefit of those who have not read that book, I may here say that its sum and substance is that I was brought up in a pious Hindu home amidst the most orthodox influences and that I grew up as a devout Hindu. I believed Siva to be the Supreme God, assisted by Brahma and Vishnu in the acts of creation and preservation. I worshipped also many other gods and goddesses in idol form as well as devils. I observed caste, kept many ceremonies and fasts, did small acts of service to the gods and went on pilgrimages which were enough to save a man according to Puranic lore. I was initiated by the Guru to perform regularly my morning and evening worship. My belief in the Hindu gods broke down, when it was pointed out to me by my Christian Guru that the

character of Siva, Vishnu and Brahma, as described in the Puranas, is far from edifying; but that, on the other hand, it is immoral and distinctly debasing in its influence. From his vast and intimate acquaintance with the Puranas, my Guru supported his charges against these gods by actual evidence from the Puranic books. I may add, however, that as a Hindu youth I was ignorant of these immoral legends about Siva, Brahma and Vishnu and that therefore the charges of my Christian Guru came as a revelation to me. He also impressed on me the truth that idolatry as practised in Hinduism is sinful.

My faith in Hinduism gone, I was attracted by the doctrines of Christianity, especially those of the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of man and the exceeding sinfulness of sin,—I had till then regarded myself as a holy man, the holiness having been acquired by various pious acts,—the necessity for repentance and a new birth and the power of Christ, the Eternal Son, to forgive our sins and to keep us from sinning.

The favourable reception accorded to my previous book, *My Conversion*, which dealt with the earlier part of my life story has encouraged me to appear again before the public with this brochure which is intended to be a sequel to it. This booklet is not meant to be a complete autobiography, and consequently important events of my life, like the choice of a profession, entrance into the married life, my private life as the head of a growing family and numerous public *activities* as a citizen and a man of business, will not be found described in detail; but only referred to incidentally in so far as they affect, or

contribute to my moral and spiritual experiences. On the other hand, this little book is meant in the main to describe the ups and downs of the life of a typical convert, the adverse forces with which a person in that position has to contend and the favourable influences which stimulate him and help him on the path of spiritual progress. In short, it is not a secular biography, but my life history looked at from a moral and spiritual point of view, and I publish it as a memorial for the glory of God and for the benefit of my fellow-men.

On June 15, 1921, I completed fifty years of Christian life, commencing from the date of my baptism. While celebrating my jubilee, I humbly wished to take stock of my performances as a Christian and of any real progress that I had made in the path of spiritual self-realization. From this standpoint, I consider that my life since the time of my conversion falls roughly into three periods. The first may be described as the period of wandering in the wilderness, sometimes favoured with sublime Sinais of spiritual experience and commonly lived with a fair approximation to that life of righteousness which is expected of a Christian; but abounding in many trials and temptations and many influences which tended to make me think of temporal good rather than of eternal values. This period commenced with my baptism and covered the whole of my professional life as a Government servant and District Court Pleader, both of which extended nearly to thirty years and terminated on the day on which I retired from the legal profession.

During the second period which covered twenty years, I was comparatively free from the influence of those forces which drew me towards the world and was able in some measure to perform my first duty as a Christian, namely, the fulfilment of the Lord's command to preach the Gospel to all the people with whom I was brought into contact. I was feeling my way, studying many men and diverse methods and putting into practice what I had learnt. Whatever the effect of my addresses may have been on those who were brought within the reach of my influence, I may confidently say that the attempt to carry out the Lord's command brought me much blessing and strength, and great courage and confidence as regards the future.

I regard, however, the third period, which covers roughly the last ten years of my life, as the richest and most fruitful term in my spiritual history. I learnt almost entirely to withdraw from the world and ascend up with the Lord into the heights of that life of contemplation, which has yielded the purest joys and the most unquestioned accession of spiritual strength and vision. While during the previous period, I was wandering round Canaan in full view of the land of promise, but still unable to enter it and partake of its riches, during this last period it seemed to me that I had entered the land which flows with milk and honey, after completing more than forty years of wandering, during which I had struggled with many difficulties and attempted, but without success, to enter into the immeasurable riches of the blessed life.

In Missionary circles people sometimes speak as

if a convert's difficulties come to an end with his baptism. This brochure will show how they only begin at that point, and how they tend to vary and multiply as each successive stage of the secular life is passed by the baptised Christian. It will illustrate the principal hindrances in the way of his living the normal life of Christian righteousness, and, on the other hand, the various influences which are likely to counteract these and lift him up to realize the full meaning of the inner or spirit-life. It will show the ways and means by which it is possible to fulfil the appointed task of the Christian, and the abundance of blessing and profit that can be reaped from the life of meditation and communion with the Lord in prayer. If it helps or encourages any living brother, or gives courage and confidence to any one, who has set out in a quest similar to mine, that will be my highest reward.

I am only one of a group of converts who came over to Christianity between fifty and seventy-five years ago. I would have been very glad to publish accounts of the great and good men, who came along with me or who influenced my life, but most of them have passed away, leaving behind them no memorials of their life experience. If I have ventured to come before the public with a record of my own struggles and experiences, it is only because they are typical or representative of those of others like me, and also because it enables me to acknowledge in some measure my deep debt of obligation to some of them. For instance, the influence which Mr. H. A. Krishna Pillay my Guru, whom I have always regarded as a poet of

enduring fame in Tamil, exercised on me was unusually strong. There were others likewise who touched my life at various points. The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Devadoss has published a rapid sketch of the lives of Dhanakoti Raju, H. A. Krishna Pillay, E. Muthiah Pillay, T. A. Jothinayagam Pillay, W. T. Sathianadhan, W. E. Ganapathy Pillay, and Jesudasa Kaviroyer, and to all of these whose names will be found in the appropriate places and some others, I am under far-reaching and varied spiritual obligations. I am deeply grateful for this opportunity of bearing witness to their noble and beautiful lives. My prayer is that India may be granted many such leaders in thought and action, instinct with the Holy Spirit and shining with the wisdom which that Spirit alone can give.

To speak thy holy praise,
To hear thy holy praise,
To be thy servant true,
Saviour Jesus grant.¹

உன் திருப்புகழ் ஓதவும்
உன் திருப்புகழ் கேட்கவும்
உன் தனக்கெனே தவவும்
என் தனக்கருள் இயேசுவே

¹ I am indebted to my brother-in-law, Mr. J. Ganapathy Pillai, B. A., for this and other translations into English of Tamil verse given in this book.

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Fifty Years' Pilgrimage of a Convert

CHAPTER I

LIFE AT MADRAS

Rejoice, O my soul, that thou art spared to testify of the faithfulness of the Lord.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE RICHER WITH TIME

ACCORDING to a Tamil couplet, which is meant to compare two methods of eating a sugarcane,¹ there are those who begin with the top of the sugarcane and work their way down to the bottom, which is the sweetest part; while others begin from the root and go on to the head or top, which is much less enjoyable. So far as my spiritual life is concerned, I must describe myself as belonging to the former class, the experiences of my inner life becoming riper and richer with the years. I was baptized at Zion Church in Madras on July 15, 1871. I felt as if I had reached Zion or the City of Refuge, to which I had fled from a pursuing, accusing world. I left behind me not merely the faith of my fathers, and the traditions, customs and habits of a lifetime, which had clung to me so long as I was a Hindu; but I had broken with my relatives, and given up all who were near and dear

¹ துனியில் கரும்பு தின்ற அற்றே
அடியில் கரும்பு தின்ற அற்றே.

to me, parents and brothers and sisters, as well as the freedom that I enjoyed as a Hindu. All this I cheerfully count as loss for the sake of Christ.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF A CONVERT AFTER BAPTISM

Most converts go through a period of reaction soon after their conversion. Until baptism they have something to look forward to and prepare for; their friends and religious advisers are constantly engaged in watching and helping them, and inspiring them to go forward, and their own feelings are worked up to a high state of spiritual tension. When, however, the ceremony of baptism has taken place the inevitable reaction follows. The converts feel that they have become merged in the general body of Christians, and fancy that their missionary friends no longer take personal interest in them except as units of large congregations under their care. They have to take up some humdrum or commonplace employment, which brings to light all the mean things of life and the failings of professing Christians. Meanwhile they have definitely lost the friendship and company of their parents and relations, on whom they were wont to rely for counsel and help in all contingencies. This is usually a dangerous period for converts, when the tide of feeling and enthusiasm which brought them into Christianity becomes exhausted and there is a strong temptation to backslide, or, at least, to take up an attitude of disillusionment and indifference, if not also of positive hostility to those who brought about their conversion.

RECONCILIATION WITH MY FATHER

As soon as I was baptized, I informed my parents about it, giving them my reasons for my change of faith. The communication must have affected them seriously, as my mother was ill for a long series of months afterwards and would scarcely take her food. My orthodox Hindu father came all the way from Kulasegarapatam, a distance of 500 miles, to Madras, at a time when there were no railway communications, to take me back and induce me, if possible, to change my mind. He tried to persuade me that my Christian teachers were themselves blind men trying to lead the blind, and told me the story of the sightless man who declared to his friends that he could see God and various other visions, and that they would also see the same if they would remove their eyes. He further spoke to me as if I had fallen into a pit or well, from which he would never lift me up, even if I cried out from hunger or sickness or pain. He used all the arts he knew to bring about in me a change of my views and was very much disappointed when I stood firm. He subsequently lived to see that my change of faith was real, uplifting and spiritually beneficial to myself and other people, and eventually he became reconciled to me. I have often spoken to him seriously about the claims of the Christian religion, and, especially in his last days, I went to him and spent a considerable period of time trying to bring him to the knowledge of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of men. When he found that I had not forgotten my parents, that, on the other hand, I was willing to sympathize with

them and help them just the same as before, and that I prospered exceedingly as a man of business and the head of a family, he approved of my change. In his last days he even confessed to me that Jesus Christ was God and Saviour and that He had come to him in dreams and tried to persuade him to change his faith. He spent long periods with me at Palamcottah, sometimes six months, sometimes a year, making himself a member of my family and assisting me in every possible way ; in particular he was of invaluable assistance to me in erecting my house at Palamcottah, as he supervised the entire building operations for the space of more than a year. My mother, as I have said elsewhere, came at my earnest entreaty to live with me at Ettiyapuram and spent over a year with me. She was also thoroughly convinced that my change of faith was real and beneficial. Later on she also used to come very often to Palamcottah and make long or short stays with me. The other members of the family kept away from me for a considerable time ; but as I was ready and willing to help them in all their necessities, they too became fully reconciled to me subsequently and moved with me, more or less, as if I was still one of them.

THE VALUE OF THE RETENTION OF NON-ESSENTIAL HINDU CUSTOMS

A Hindu friend of mine was pleased to remark that, though I had become a Christian, it was well that I had not given up all my Hindu ways, and congratulated me in particular on the fact that I did not remove my *kudumi*, or tuft of hair, after

my baptism. In those days there was a regular crusade against the *kudumi* in Christian circles, as it was regarded as a proof and emblem of caste pride, and thought to be a connecting link kept up with Hinduism. Bishop Sargent would not baptize any Hindu convert unless he had removed his *kudumi*. Dr. Caldwell, on the other hand, held the opposite view and insisted on its retention in the S.P.G. Mission. Looking back to these incidents from this distance of time, it seems to me that it was unwise to insist on these non-essentials, which made converts ridiculous and degraded them in the eyes of their Hindu relations, and served to make the gulf between the convert and them wider and more annoying. For my part I paid little attention to these outward changes, and did not even assume any new English names at my baptism as other friends did; but still preserved my old name which had nothing specifically Hindu about it. I was conservative by nature and thought that more harm than good would result from all violent and revolutionary changes, eventually resulting in inevitable reaction. In the same spirit I continued to be a vegetarian for a very long time after my baptism. I tried to persuade my Christian friends in Madras and elsewhere that it was unwise for them to exercise the liberty that they had obtained, by becoming Christians, in favour of a change of diet. In my district especially there is a deep abhorrence of meat and meat eaters, and there was no possibility of communicating with one's Hindu relatives, or of influencing them for good, if one took to meat eating openly or secretly. Hindu friends

are apt to imagine that the only motives which induce people to become Christians are that they may take to meat and drink, and choose for themselves a pretty wife of a more refined character than they could get in Hindu society. In order not to give a handle to people, who were so ready to attribute low motives, I was for a long time unwilling to marry, though I could easily have married into good families soon after my conversion. Frequently pressure of different sorts was brought to bear upon me to that end. For the same reason I continued to be a vegetarian, and even now entirely sympathize with those of my Christian friends, who continue that diet and the simple self-denying Hindu mode of living where it does not conflict with Christian principles.

REFUSAL TO JOIN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

About this time, as I kept an open mind, a Roman Catholic catechist tried his best to persuade me to become a member of his Church, but the superstitions and image worship which were the outstanding features of Roman Catholicism, as it was then known to me, prevented one like myself, who had recently broken away from just these evils, from taking them up again in another form.

THE STUDY OF BRAHMO SAMAJ AND THEOSOPHY

I did not give up my spirit of enquiry, but when I was in Madras I interested myself in the Bramo

Samaj, read their books and attended their prayer meetings. I attended the lectures of Keshub Chander Sen, the great Brahmo leader, and his eloquent and persuasive addresses confirmed the ideas that I had already assimilated and made my own about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Later on, when Theosophy came into vogue in South India, I kept an open mind with reference to it and studied its literature closely and carefully for several years, so that I might take advantage of any truths that might be found in its teaching. Most of the Theosophists fully believe that Christ is an Avatar of God, and at the Adyar, their headquarters, they have the figure of Christ cut in stone with a lamp on one side, and one of Krishna with his flute. They have done yeoman service to Christianity by removing the prejudices in Hindu minds against Christ, and by adopting Christian ways of thinking, expression and worship. In order that I might keep in touch with Hindu literature, I tried to learn Sanskrit and studied the teachings of *Brahma Dharma*, which contains collections from the four *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* and other important Hindu scriptures. The sum and substance of the teaching therein is the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. It condemned idol worship and caste as sinful, and taught that there was one God behind the illusory phenomena which deceive men. As the result of my careful study of the Saiva Scriptures and of discussions with Thambirans and other Saiva leaders, with whom I moved in terms of intimacy while at Madras, I have always thought that

there were many points of resemblance between the Christian and the Saiva faiths, that their Bhaktas¹ had been granted a profound insight into spiritual truth and had attained to sublime heights of ecstasy and devotion, and that Christian preachers have not taken sufficient advantage of these in presenting Christianity in an acceptable manner to Hindus. I have worked out these contrasts in Appendix B. As in Madras so throughout my life I have always been ready to receive spiritual nourishment from whatever source I could get it, and I have told my children early in life that they must always keep an enquiring mind and that, if they became honestly convinced that any form of faith was truer or more uplifting than the one they held, it was their duty to follow the light of their consciences and live according to it.

THE CHARACTER OF THE REV.

A. R. SYMMONDS

While in Madras, I was in the habit of visiting and moving on friendly terms with all the leading Christians there, and the fellowship, hospitality and the edifying conversations, prayers and wise counsels of such eminent men as Dr. Dhanakoti Raju, Mr. Sathianadan and Mr. Jothinayagam Pillay, older converts from Tinnevely, who had passed through experiences similar to mine, enriched my life, confirmed my faith and encouraged me to go

¹ Bhaktas = pious people.

forward in the Christian life. With gratitude and profound thankfulness I still remember the extraordinary kindness and courtesy of the Rev. A. R. Symonds, who was the Principal of the school when I was at Sullivans Gardens. Though Porter and Thompson were then at the Presidency College and Miller was in charge of the Christian College, Mr. Symonds had a very high reputation as a teacher and preacher in those days, and was held in great regard, both by Hindus and Christians, for his high principles and spirituality of life and his great erudition and insight. It was a privilege to be trained under a man like him, and I remember in particular his kindness in taking me to Mount Road in his carriage one day and then asking me to go on in it to Chintadripet, while he himself walked to the residence of the Governor with whom he moved on terms of intimacy. While in class the hardest terms which he used for rebuking the slothful or wayward student were to call us babes and children. This extraordinary mildness contrasted very favourably with the cruel treatment to which pupils were subjected in the pial schools of those days, where they were made to kneel for hours on stones, or to have pepper put into their eyes as punishments for slackness in learning. I was regular in attending Christian services both before and after my baptism. I particularly remember the very able and inspiring sermons preached by Mr. Symonds, and the uplifting and awe-inspiring music and worship as it was then carried on in the Cathedral at Teynampet.

MY FRIENDSHIP WITH DR. DHANAKOTI RAJU

Dr. Dhanakoti Raju, a man of brilliant parts, who had thought out for himself all the great questions of life and had amassed an immense mass of erudition and knowledge, was another person who exercised a profound influence over me at this stage. Though he was so learned and had also a very extensive practice in Madras as a medical man, he lived in the simplest possible style, sleeping on a mat, living on the plainest diet and training up his children in arts and crafts and the simple but stately manners that he himself practised. He always kept open house for us, and it was a privilege to join with him in his family devotions which were very regular and deeply spiritual. Though he afterwards became a man of the world and embarked in a number of enterprises, which overshadowed the beauty of his early Christian life, he was always a particular friend of mine and he has stayed for more than a year at a time in my house at Palamcottah. He opened two big salt factories, one at Kulasegarapatam and the other at Kayalpatam, for the purpose of putting on the market salt which was both purer and cheaper than any then available in the Presidency. He succeeded to a certain extent in doing so. He induced many of his friends to invest their capital in his enterprises and I was one of those who took very large shares. He opened a big iron manufactory at Madras, which is still being run successfully by his son Mr. David Danakoti Raju, a match factory at Trivandrum and a big hydropathic establishment which had a great vogue till his death.



DR. DHANAKOTI RAJU.

He also purchased two steamers and ran them between Tuticorin and Colombo, compelling the B. I. Steam Navigation Company to make their service a daily instead of a weekly one. It was not, however, these worldly achievements that appealed to me, but his great learning and brilliant intellectual powers with which he used to entertain us for weeks and months, discussing problems of philosophy, science and religion to our edification and profit. His right hand man, Mr. Shanmugasundaram Pillai, was also a particular friend of mine, as he was baptized at the same time as myself and constantly discussed moral and religious questions with me. He was a man of penetrating insight and numerous ideas and I greatly benefited by his company. I may mention in particular that the plan of my present house in Palāmcottah is in part due to him.

CHAPTER II

LIFE AT SAWYERPURAM

As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. 2 COR. i. 5.

MY own period of reaction after conversion came to me soon enough, namely, on my return from Madras to Sawyerpuram where I was employed for seven months in teaching Tamil to the Rev. Mr. Billing of the S.P.G. Mission. I have no complaint to make against this gentleman, who was full of kindness and goodwill towards me. He appreciated all the trouble I took on his behalf and was most generous and sympathetic in his relation towards me then and afterwards.

SICKNESS AND DESPAIR

During this short period, however, when there was no one to live with me or look after me, I fell seriously ill twice, and during my illness I obtained little of that nursing and careful attention which I could have counted upon in my own home. Naturally my mind was full of bitter recollections of all that I had sacrificed and the comforts which I missed. In the state of mind through which I then passed, I felt greatly inclined to rejoin my parents for medical treatment and home nursing and would have actually done so but for the certainty that they would laugh at me and insult me. My paternal uncle was the only relation who came to me to comfort me during this period of bitterness and

heart-searching; my parents and other relatives left me severely alone.

I could have saved myself a good deal of this trouble, if I had taken advantage of the liberal offer of hospitality held out to me by Mr. H. A. Krishna Pillay¹, who was still at Sawyerpuram and to whom I still looked up with regard and reverence as my esteemed Guru.² But as he had many children and I did not at that stage desire to connect myself with any Christian family, I determined to live alone, and I was very often reduced to the necessity of getting my meals from the club or of taking hasty meals prepared by poor cooks. My friend did not quite appreciate my reasons for wishing to live apart; I could not, therefore, get that assistance from him and that measure of good-will that I am sure I could have obtained in other circumstances.

SAWYERPURAM, THEN AND NOW

I remember that when I was acting as Tamil Munshi to the Rev. Mr. Billling, I paid a visit to the leading European missionary there, in company with Mr. H. A. Krishna Pillay, and was surprised to learn that I was behaving improperly in walking up to the steps of his bungalow with my shoes on, instead of leaving them at the gate of his compound, as other ministers and teachers employed under him were in the habit of doing. What a great change has taken place since? During a recent visit I stayed in the very bungalow and occupied the very

¹ See the *History of the C. M. S. in Tinnevely*, p. 258 for a brief notice of H. A. Krishna Pillay.

² Guru, a Teacher.

rooms which the said European missionary then occupied. With a view to refresh my recollections of Sawyerpuram and revisit the scenes of my early struggles, I paid a visit to the town in March, 1922 and found a big contrast between the village as it is at present and Sawyerpuram as I had known it. There were then more than one European missionary, a high school with a large number of students in it, and a European Principal in charge of it. Now all these are gone, the buildings are mostly vacant and there is only a secondary school and the necessary staff. As a set-off, however, there is now a large, spacious and well ornamented church, which is attended by congregations of about 700 to 1,000 every Sabbath. At the request of the local Pastor I preached in it on a Sunday in March last, and gave testimony that the seeds of my faith were sown there, that God who had begun a good work in me then had continued to stand by me during more than fifty years, and that recently He had saved me miraculously from an accident that might have resulted in my death while travelling in a railway trolley in the neighbourhood of Sawyerpuram. The village was called after an Eurasian layman, named Sawyer, who substantially assisted the mission more than a hundred years ago and greatly helped in the building up of mission work at Palamcottah and elsewhere. His prayers and the labours of those earnest and godly men, who succeeded him, have resulted in large and self-supporting Churches, both at Sawyerpuram and at Chendiambalam in the neighbourhood where also all the Hindus have become Christians.

CHAPTER III

LIFE AT ETTIYAPURAM

His delight is in the Law of the Lord. Psalm i. 2.

And whatsoever He doeth shall prosper. Psalm i. 3

SECTION I—EMPLOYMENT AND STUDY

I SPENT the next three years of my life at Ettiyapuram as a clerk of the large estates which were under the management of the Court of Wards, the Zemindar¹ being then a minor. These three years were among the happiest and most successful in my career, and the grace of God enabled me to maintain and improve my spiritual life during this period; physically too I was then strong and robust and I was never ill. On the other hand, I was so strong that I could easily lift an *Anda* holding three big pots of water. I consider that this was the principal formative period in my life, as during these three years I not only selected and prepared for my profession in life and married; but also formed those habits of life and study which have helped me ever since and enabled me to attain whatever success I have achieved. I had a good deal of time to myself for study and discussion, and the opportunities for meditation and prayer that I then enjoyed were helpful in building up my character and my moral fibre.

¹ Zemindar, a rich landed proprietor.

MR. W. E. GANAPATHY PILLAY'S EXAMPLE

The principal personal influence on my life during this period was that of Mr. W. E. Ganapathy Pillay, then employed in the management of the Ettiyapuram Estate as Tahsildar.¹ Starting from humble beginnings, he had risen rapidly in Government service by patience and hard work, and by reason of the favourable impression which his high principles, equable temper, truthfulness and integrity made upon his superior officers and the public in general. He was a man of a generous and affectionate nature ; his manners were peculiarly tender and refined, being those of a Christian gentleman. His successful career was an example and an inspiration to me, and I was greatly influenced by his habits and manner of life. Example is the most potent of instructors though it teaches without a tongue. Learning generally is done more easily and quickly through the eye than through the ear ; the training of a man's character in particular is principally dependent on the models set before him for admiration and imitation. We take unconsciously after the people about us, and in youth especially there is a magnetic affinity which enables us to assimilate the likeness of those we admire. I am free to confess that I have always been largely influenced by my environments, and during this period my close contact with Mr. W. E. Ganapathy Pillay, influenced me greatly and moulded my habits and manners for the rest of my life. My Ettiyapuram

¹ Tahsildar, a Revenue Officer, a subordinate to the District Collector.

career was by no means smooth from the beginning. I was new to my task and had no acquaintance with the minutiae of routine revenue work. My fellow clerks, instead of helping me by putting me in the way, ridiculed me and amused themselves at my expense. I had to work from early morning until 8 p.m., at night; and the Tahsildar, who at first was indifferent to me, was so little pleased with my work that he proposed to transfer me to the post of a clerk under the Overseer of Public Works. I resented this and wrote to Mr. Billing, requesting him to take me back again as his Tamil teacher. He replied with a long and sympathetic letter, in which he pointed out the many difficulties that I had to overcome before I had obtained my appointment and referred to the letters of recommendation that I had to obtain. He advised me to remain at my post. I had never approached the Tahsildar till then, for, in common with other clerks, I looked upon him with fear and reverence; but eventually, putting aside my pride and reserve, I visited him and unburdened my troubles to him. He received me with sympathy, encouraged me and promised to teach me my work whenever I met with any difficulty. It was arranged that I should teach his children English an hour every day in the mornings, and in return I was to have the rest of the mornings free. I took advantage of this freedom to devote my leisure to the study of the law. The Tahsildar encouraged me to appear for different examinations, showed me the proper method of preparing for them and gave me the benefit of his valuable guidance and counsel.

It was during this period that I passed the various examinations which qualified me to practise as a Vakil, or obtain employment as a Deputy Collector. What was of even greater importance, I formed, chiefly from the example of Mr. W. E. Ganapathy Pillay, those habits of hard work, thoroughness and perseverance which have ever since stood me in such good stead. Previously I was wont to rely on my native intelligence and quickness of perception, to read rapidly and in a desultory fashion and to take very little pains to fix or ground the knowledge I had acquired permanently in my memory. I now learnt that in life, as well as in examinations, mere quickness counts for little and that what pays in the long run is thoroughness and patience, carefulness and method. The consequence of this new system of study was that I was successful in every one of the examinations for which I appeared, in one of them being placed first in the Presidency. These successes greatly encouraged me and gave me confidence in myself. The knowledge that I had acquired of Hindu Law and the Standing Orders of the Board of Revenue enabled me to discharge the duties entrusted to me in connection with the grant of darkhast lands and the transfer of pattas, so well that my work was appreciated by my superior officer, whose recommendations were all accepted and who received his share of praise from those above him. These two branches of work were such that a dishonest clerk could easily have made a good deal of money out of his place ; but the Tahsildar preferred me in the appointment as he had the greatest confidence

in my trustworthiness and honesty. My fellow clerks were always helping themselves to perquisites, but I aimed at a high standard of integrity, and, when a wealthy landowner of my acquaintance took advantage of my familiarity with him to press upon me a sum of money for some help which I had already rendered, I rebuked him so severely for his misconduct that such temptations were never put in my way again. On one occasion the Tahsildar's wife charged me with having uttered a falsehood. As I was intent on maintaining a high standard of truthfulness in my life, I resented this severely, though she was the wife of my superior officer. I challenged her to prove her assertion. She was unable to do it and, in order to satisfy my wounded feelings, she tendered an apology which I accepted.

There was no church or place of worship at Ettiyapuram, but I was very regular in my daily devotions and observed the Sabbath strictly as a day of rest, making every effort to keep it holy. I did not study any secular books on Sundays. A catechist used to come and read the Sunday services of the Church of England, and follow them up with addresses to which I attended with diligence and profit. During my morning and evening walks I formed habits of meditation, of prayer and of religious conversation, which I have since maintained through life. I never aimed at going to Ettiyapuram but it was a providential arrangement which took me there, and I have since come to regard the period of my life spent there as one which made a great change for the better in my life, in body, mind and soul.

SECTION 2—MY MARRIAGE

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing and obtaineth favour of the Lord. Prov. xviii. 22.

Who can find a virtuous woman: for her price is far above rubies. Prov. xxx. 10.

During the first of the three years I spent in Ettiyapuram I had my meals at a club; during the second year my parents became reconciled to me. My mother came to see me and stayed with me for nearly a year and prepared my meals. In the third year I stayed with Mr. W. E. Ganapathy Pillay, as it was by this time understood that I was to marry one of his daughters. He was very happy and affectionate in his family life, and the time I spent with him was a period of great pleasure and profit to me. The Tahsildar's young children were very entertaining, and I came to have a liking for the ways of the family and for its individual members. When eventually it was proposed that I should marry into the family, my parents were greatly pleased and thoroughly approved of the match, and forwarded it in every way; partly because the family came of a very good Hindu caste, partly on account of the Tahsildar's official position and also because of the respect in which the family was universally held.

MY UNWILLINGNESS TO MARRY

The principal objections to the marriage came from myself. Soon after my baptism I had made up my mind not to marry, lest I should give a handle to those who were ready to say that I had become a Christian for the purpose of getting a Christian wife. Further, I felt that a bachelor

who was unburdened with the cares and anxieties of family life, was better fitted to achieve the Christian ideal of holiness and service to his fellow-men than one who was married. I had also read English books and novels giving glowing accounts of the qualities that may be expected in women, and had come across some noble specimens of them both among the English and Indian ladies whom I had met in the city of Madras. I was very doubtful as to whether I could get a person who could be my real companion and helpmate in a country town. Further, there was the economic objection that my income as a head clerk was barely sufficient to maintain myself and would be somewhat inadequate for a wife and family of growing children. This last defect, however, was remedied about this time, as a few months before my marriage, I had become a Pleader and from the beginning began to make a very good income, many times larger than what I had earned as a clerk. I became convinced also that it was impossible for a single man to stand by himself all his life without any one to share his thoughts and cares. Meanwhile, I was well received and treated so warmly by Mr. W. E. Ganapathy Pillay that it was impossible for me to keep back without returning their kindness and hospitality, and so in this, as in other stages of my life, I slid into marriage scarcely knowing that I did so.

THE CHARACTER AND TRAINING OF MY WIFE

Some of the circumstances connected with my marriage led to a feeling of disappointment and

disillusionment. In the first place, the wedding ceremony was very different in form and effect from that which I had pictured to myself. It lasted for ten days, during which there was endless feasting and beating of tom-toms attended with enormous expense (Rs. 5,000 I believe), and numerous antiquated ceremonies which were all very distasteful to me. On the other hand, there was a total absence of that solemnity and religious feeling which a sacrament of that character seemed to demand. As the wedding was celebrated in a village, in which very old-fashioned ideas prevailed as to the manner in which it ought to be conducted, there was little to emphasize the higher ideals which are associated with a Christian marriage, and there was none of that privacy and that heart-to-heart converse or communion that ought to take place during the beginning of a married life. I had read English books on the subject of marriage, and expected of my bride, at least, a measure of the companionship and comradeship, which are inseparably associated with a wedding in the west. But my wife was so excessively shy and retiring that it was many days before I could get to talk with her; and so young (only fourteen years of age) that she could scarcely be expected to be my companion or comrade. Her education, too, was of such a simple and elementary character that it was some time before I could discuss serious subjects with her with any degree of profit or pleasure. Though I have since been satisfied that my marriage has been abundantly blessed of God and, therefore, must have been intended by Him, and that my wife's character

contained many of the elements which were wanting in my own, yet my feeling at the time was, I must confess, one of disappointment, principally because I had started in my youthful enthusiasm with too exalted and idealized notions of the married life. I had, however, the advantage, which Hindu husbands generally have not, of knowing the character and qualifications of my bride, and of being thoroughly satisfied that the solid elements necessary for a happy married life were capable of being contributed by her. But, on the other hand, her youth, inexperience and want of education made her less of a companion and help, and more of the type of an ordinary Hindu wife than I had reason to expect from her previous training. I determined to remedy these defects to the best of my power and ability and found in my wife a willing and responsive pupil. She already knew how to read and write Tamil well and to keep accounts. She had also learnt a certain amount of elementary English. During my spare hours I devoted much time to improving her knowledge of English, making her read English books for herself and frequently also to me. Subsequently, when my young children were growing up and I had to engage tutors for them, I made the same persons teach her also at home, so that she could eventually read any ordinary English book with profit and pleasure and engage in conversation in English with the members of the family and people from outside. Mr. Jothinayagam Pillay's eldest daughter, who knew Indian music well, taught her a great many Tamil hymns and lyrics at my request when we were in Tuticorin.

Subsequently for her and my two elder children, I employed a music teacher, who taught them a great deal of Indian music. Likewise I purchased a harmonium for her and engaged a tutor in English music, under whom she learnt for two or three years and attained a fair degree of proficiency. She was encouraged to go to the houses of English missionaries in Palamcottah and to meetings and parties, with the result that she knew how to carry herself in such places. During middle life she could drive a carriage, sing and play Indian or English hymns in public, and had sufficient acquaintance with English to teach it to others, which saved me the trouble of sending my children early to school, for I could be sure that she could give them the elements of English and Tamil. I could have done more but for the fact that four or five years after I married, she began to suffer from an infirmity in hearing which prevented advanced study. She is religious by nature and has always been a devoted and earnest Christian. She has faithfully co-operated with me in giving my children a Christian upbringing. Her strong, if simple faith, her patience and humility, the simplicity of her character and persistent good nature have been invaluable assets to me in my married life.

TROUBLES AT THE WEDDING

Two incidents in connection with my wedding I may here mention before I pass on. My father-in-law was in the habit of receiving S.P.G. and C.M.S. clergymen in his house, irrespective of caste, and dining with them. He accordingly sent

out invitations to some of them and they attended the marriage ceremony. At the time of the wedding dinner, however, the Christians of my caste, who had come over from Palamcottah, raised objections to partaking of the same feast with these clergymen. The Rev. Mr. Vedanayagam of Vagaikulam, who was a friend of the family, and as devout and earnest as he was able and thoughtful, solved the difficulty for us by sitting down in a separate tent with all the clergymen who had come, while all the other guests were entertained in the main pandal. I followed the footsteps of my father-in-law in such matters.

Another incident, though of small importance at the time, had a lasting effect on my subsequent life. It had been arranged that the wedding of another poor Christian convert, in whom my father-in-law was interested, should be celebrated at the same time as my own and by the same priest. Though I had thoughtlessly agreed to this in the first instance, I subsequently felt serious objections to the course and urged them on my father-in-law. He, however, would not go back upon the original arrangements. He consulted only the good opinion of the other bridegroom's father-in-law and administered a rather severe rebuke to me, a treatment which he had never accorded to me during my three previous years at Ettiyapuram. This left a lasting wound in my heart. I am afraid I cherished feelings of resentment towards him for many years. I fell into the error of letting my passions ride in triumph over me while my nobler powers lay humbled to the dust. Grace did not reign within my heart and

make the members of my body instruments of righteousness. This condition continued for a long time and was finally checked only at Ootacamund several years later, when I came in contact with the Salvation Army and was able to overcome my besetting sin of pride.

SECTION 3—THE LEGAL PROFESSION: OBJECTIONS TO IT REMOVED

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches and loving favour rather than silver and gold. Prov. xxii. 1.

On the advice of my friends, Messrs. E. Muthiah Pillay and W. E. Ganapathy Pillay, I chose the law as my profession, though personally I had little or no inclination towards it, and commenced practice at Ettiyapuram itself just two or three months before my marriage. My ambition when I was young was to become a Sub-Magistrate in the Public Service, because the person who held that office in my town was the biggest man there and was regarded with feelings of very great reverence. I feared that Vakils could not maintain a very high standard of truth or integrity, as I thought they had to concoct evidence and documents to help their client's case. They would often have to argue against their own private convictions and in favour of persons, who had obviously committed offences or done that which was wrong. They would have to make the worse appear the better case, and adduce law and facts, arguments and authorities to support the wrong side of a case, and all this for a paltry remuneration. These were some among the objections which I urged against

the profession of the lawyer and which I myself entertained. I discussed these objections with my two friends and also with Mr. Srinivasacharlu, the District Munsiff of Srivaikuntam, to whom my father-in-law sent me for consultation. He convinced me that it was not the business of a Vakil to prepare or concoct evidence, that being rather the affair of the clients and their agents or Vakil's clerks, and that the Vakil had only to devote himself to studying his client's case and to present it in the best possible manner with all the legal arguments available for the consideration of the Court. As this advice came from a judicial officer of character and experience, I was convinced that there was nothing wrong in the profession, which was practised by men of such eminent piety and character as Lord Hale, Lord Hatherly and Lord Selborne, and I was persuaded to take it up and make it the profession of my life. I may say that I strictly followed the method suggested by Mr. Srinivasacharlu and never concerned myself with the preparation of evidence. As an illustration I may mention that, when I was engaged in a big suit to which the Zemindar of Ettiyapuram was a party, I persuaded that gentleman to employ another Vakil of the High Court to go through the evidence of 200 witnesses and to give him a large fee for his pains. On another occasion when I had to adduce the evidence of a dancing girl for the purpose of showing the immorality of a debt incurred by my client, I left the public and private examination of the said girl to another Vakil who was paid handsomely for his services.

THE SECRET OF MY SUCCESS AS A LAWYER

From the beginning I was successful in my new profession. My training as a teacher and public servant and the invaluable mental discipline I had received, during the period in which I investigated the claims of rival faiths, helped me when I set up practice. I was able to earn in the first three months ten to fifteen times the income that I had received as a clerk. Mr. W. E. Ganapathy Pillay exercised second class powers as a Magistrate during his tenure of office as Tahsildar at Ettiyapuram. I was for some time his magisterial clerk. I read his judgements carefully, and listened to the arguments urged before him by leading Vakils from the District Court, Palamcottah, who came to appear before him. During my three years at Ettiyapuram, I also enjoyed the opportunity of arguing and of discussing with Mr. W. E. Ganapathy Pillay and others the legal subjects that I had studied and the practical questions connected with Revenue Law. I also took part in a weekly discussion class, which we had arranged at Ettiyapuram for the sharpening of our wits and powers of argument. I consider, however, that the strongest reason for my success in the legal profession was my training in reasoning out for myself the pros and cons of the Hindu and Christian faiths. The habit of comparing the claims of these rival creeds, and of weighing the merits of the arguments that could be advanced in favour of the one or the other, enabled me to form my powers of discrimination and judgement, and to see at once the truth that lay behind a case and the weight that could be attached to particular arguments. The

mental discipline that I had undergone at Ettiyapuram, during my preparation for the criminal and civil, judicial and revenue tests, and the habits of industry and painstaking application that I had then formed also stood me in good stead. I was determined to succeed not merely in my profession, but in every case I took up and never spared any effort to win my cases. The Magistrate before whom I appeared most frequently was one who was in the habit of receiving bribes; and, as I was always engaged for the side which had not approached him, it was a stiff uphill fight for me and I had to work and think very hard. The fact that I had undertaken the responsibility for a wife and growing family, and that I must hereafter fight my own battle with little help or aid from others, nerved me for my task, and I was soon able to meet the best lawyers in the district on their own ground. It would appear that there was a discussion among some eminent English Judges as to the best qualifications for getting on at the Bar. One Judge suggested that the young aspirant should devote his days and nights to Blackstone. Another said, 'Marry an attorney's daughter,' and a third broke in with the saying, 'The very best method is to start without a shilling.' Over and over again we see that the man who has to rely on his own exertions and skill makes the best lawyer.

I may say that the plan or sketch of my subsequent life was drawn up, the foundations for it laid and a fence or compound wall erected round it during the time I spent at Ettiyapuram. For a short time I was engaged as private tutor to the minor Zemindar,

who learnt to know me and held me in respect during that period. He found it easy to offer me the position of a Vakil for his estate two or three years later on. The monthly retainer that he gave me made me sure of my position as a lawyer, while the influence that I had with him gave me a position and a status in the district which it would have otherwise been difficult for me to achieve. My character was fenced in and formed during this period. The good influence exerted on me by Mr. W. E. Ganapathy Pillay prevented me from straying in pursuit of vague aims and unrealizable desires. When later on I moved to Tuticorin and enjoyed greater freedom of action, I felt the want of this controlling influence and let myself go in certain directions in which I would not have gone at Ettiyapuram.

CHAPTER IV

LIFE AT TUTICORIN

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Matt. v. 11.

A GROWING LOVE OF MONEY

FROM Ettiyapuram I moved to Tuticorin as there was larger scope in the latter station for engaging in legal practice. In addition to a Sub-Magistrate's Court, there were the Courts and offices of a Sub-Collector and of a Subordinate Judge. From the time that I set up my office at Tuticorin, I was successful in building up a lucrative practice and, what was of much more importance, a sound knowledge of law as it is administered in the courts and my competency as a Pleader as well. My initial successes as a Vakil, however, tended to make me forgetful of my spiritual health which had then fallen to a low ebb. I was so busy during the day and so tired after the day's work that I sometimes neglected the Sabbath. Bishop Caldwell was not then permanently stationed in Tuticorin, and there were no good religious ministrations to attract me and keep me faithful. On the other hand, the love of the world and the love of money, which is described in the Bible as the root of all evil, grew upon me and coloured my dreams. The more money I earned the more ambitious I became to build up a big estate, and to make myself a man of

the world. This love of money might easily have become a serious failing with me, as it has been in the case of other lawyers of my acquaintance, but for the fact that nearly all the savings I effected during the first five years of my life, amounting to more than ten thousand rupees, were invested in a coffee estate near Kuttalam and totally lost. In common with other Christian friends, who took shares in the enterprise, I was inclined to believe that we were going to make exceptional profits and get rich quickly. The sudden disaster that overtook us taught me many lessons and particularly prudence in money matters, and less reliance on money and the power that it brings.

DIFFICULTIES WITH A JUDGE WHO RESENTED MY CHANGE OF FAITH

So long as I was in Ettiyapuram I was free from all reproach or contempt on account of my change of faith, as I was under the shelter and protection of Mr. W. E. Ganapathy Pillay, himself a convert held in great esteem by all people. The entire atmosphere changed when I shifted my quarters to Tuticorin. Mr. Vasudeva Rao, who was the Sub-Judge when I went there, was always kind and courteous to me, but a bigoted and prejudiced Hindu, who succeeded him a few months later, disliked my change of religion and availed himself of every possible opportunity to give expression to his feelings of scorn and contempt. He was a very able Judge, quick, intelligent and shrewd, with a ready discernment of the truth and a strong and authoritative manner; but he was fond of self-

glorification and flattery from others. He had an inherent hatred of Christianity and Christians and, as he was wont to express his opinions freely in public, sometimes in vile and obscene language, he made things very unpleasant for me. He was in the habit in open court of calling a Brahmin convert who appeared before him a Pariah. The other Vakils practising in Tuticorin went to the station to receive him, and he conceived a prejudice against me, because I was not one of them and also because by inadvertence I made a salaam to him in court instead of the usual Hindu salutation known as *Kumbidu*, of which he was very fond and which my fellow Vakils daily offered to him. He sneered and scoffed at my conversion in open court, charged me with ignorance of the higher aspects of the Saiva religion, and called in question my capacity to change my faith. Like Peter I was prepared to give him my reasons for the faith that was in me and for over a month, after the day's work was over and the public withdrew, I used to discuss and compare religious questions with him and show him the arguments which had induced me to become a Christian. He subsequently relented in his attitude towards me and, though he called himself a *Vedantin* and could not be convinced of the truth of the Christian faith, he was prepared to admit that my change of religion was genuine and that I had valid reasons for giving up the faith of my ancestors. Out of evil cometh good. The course of conduct adopted by that man compelled me sometimes, in the presence of my fellow Vakils and clerks of the court, to bear

testimony to the glory of God and the blessings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Eventually the Judge was prepared to subscribe to some of the truths in the Christian religion, and one day he produced a Bible which he said he had won as a prize for the thoroughness with which he had studied it in his student days. Though he professed to be a *Vedantin* and was known to be an honest and upright Judge, his private life was not of a desirable type, as will appear from the two following circumstances which further increased the estrangement between us. He arranged for a nautch party in connexion with a wedding that was celebrated in his house and expected each of the Vakils to be present and give the dancing girl gifts of ten rupees. I gave offence by refusing to attend the ceremony, but, in order to mollify his feelings, I subsequently sent a sum of ten rupees. One day in court he abused a wealthy Brahmin merchant in obscene and unseemly language. The merchant at once filed an action of defamation against him and cited all the lawyers practising in the court as his witnesses. My fellow Vakils mostly gave evidence in the Judge's favour; but, though I was requested on the Judge's behalf to refrain from giving evidence as to some of the vulgar language employed by him, I preferred to speak the truth and this also irritated him. While I was at Tuticorin I accepted engagements in criminal cases in preference to cases in the civil courts, as the former were better paid and the remuneration for the latter was very poor. During the occasions on which I had to be absent I used to entrust my cases to junior Vakils, which gave

great offence to the Sub-Judge and provoked him to dismiss my petitions and cases on insufficient grounds. Though the profession of a Vakil is reputed to be an independent one, a strong Judge can make life unpleasant for him by unwarranted treatment of the above kind.

When I am about it I may mention one noteworthy criminal case in which I was engaged before Mr. J. Davies, I.C.S., who afterwards became a Judge of the High Court. He had entertained a strong prejudice against my client, who was an Inspector of Police and a man well known in the district, and I had very uphill work the whole time in his court. In spite of my efforts the Inspector was committed to the Sessions ; but just about that time I obtained a *Sanad* for practising in the District Court and appeared in the same case with other Vakils before the Sessions Judge who was good enough to release my client. This was a source of great thankfulness to me and was of considerable service in opening my career at Palamcottah, as it was a piece of professional success which became known to everybody in a short time. I worked very hard for my client, as he was my father's friend and intimate acquaintance, and I myself had often waited upon him in my younger days for the privilege of talking English with him. I used to admire him much for the grand figure that he used to display in his police uniform when mounted on a big white horse. One of my clients, who had great confidence in me, while I was at Tuticorin and who constantly engaged my services, has since risen to very great eminence and affluence.

This Chinnathambi Marakayar, who was a wealthy Muhammadan merchant, became one of my standing clients and he is now reputed to be worth forty lakhs of rupees. He has always been a good friend of mine and professes openly to have adopted many of my ways and manners. Another wealthy merchant who was my client has also earned forty or fifty lakhs. He still keeps up the simplicity and faith of his early life, but continues to be a good friend. I was influenced by these two men to acquire wealth.

CONFLICT WITH MY FATHER

About this time there was another occasion in which my feelings for my father, who had now become thoroughly reconciled to me, and my desire to be truthful came into conflict. He had filed a suit for the recovery of a portion of our family property, which had passed into the possession of a number of Muhammadans under a fraudulent decree, alleging as the basis of his suit a partition between the members of our family which had never really taken place. The defendants, feeling sure that I would give truthful evidence, cited me as their witness and went so far as to obtain a warrant to compel me to attend court and give evidence. I had to testify that the alleged partition had never taken place which was the real truth; but in order to satisfy my father I paid him the entire costs of the suit which of course he lost. He filed an appeal in the Sub-Court which also failed and he compelled me to pay him the cost of this appeal also. In addition, he made heavy demands upon

me at the same time for the marriage of my younger brother.

FAVOURABLE INFLUENCES AT TUTICORIN

As a set-off against these troubles I may mention certain favourable influences which helped me while at Tuticorin. Mr. Barter, a European merchant of very high character and principles, became one of my clients and I was brought into close contact with him. Though in some cases it was against his own interest to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, he was faithful to his principles and refrained from making the slightest departure from the strict line of rectitude. I was greatly impressed by the way in which he applied his Christian principles in the world of business, in which it is sometimes said that it is impossible to be truly a Christian. As a result of a severe attack of fever, brought on by excessively hard work in connection with the defence of a Christian Overseer who was charged with a criminal offence, I was laid up for nearly three months and was reduced to straits for money. Mr. Barter, who had by that time become my standing client, generously sent me at once a cheque for Rs. 1,000, partly for services already rendered and partly as an earnest for future work. I still remember with gratitude this liberal and timely assistance, and have regarded it as an example which I should follow when similar cases come to my notice. During my frequent visits to his bungalow I made careful note of his method of housekeeping, and the excellent manner in which his furniture had been selected and arranged, and

was being kept tidy from day to day. I tried in some measure to reproduce similar conditions in my own bungalow.

Though Dr. Caldwell was living at Ediyangudi during this period he used to pay occasional visits to Tuticorin, and I was greatly benefited by listening to his addresses, which in thoughtfulness, clearness and persuasiveness were models of what such addresses should be. He was an eminent linguist, and a man of very great erudition, but these did not weigh upon him, but, on the other hand, he excelled in the use of simple, telling and most appropriate language and imagery. In a spacious temporary structure erected in front of our house in Tuticorin, he preached continuously for a week to the respectable educated Hindus of the place which had a great effect on them as well as on me. I was very anxious to follow in his footsteps and to preach the Gospel to the Hindus about me, but the limits of my time and capacity prevented me from accomplishing all that I had in mind.

I was immensely benefited by the visit of Father Rivington, one of the most devoted and saintly missionaries whom I have had the privilege of meeting. In addition he was a very learned man and a great preacher as well. His addresses made a deep impression on my mind and recalled me to those habits of spiritual blessedness from which I had slid as a man of the world. A long personal conversation with him enabled me to search my heart and quicken my sense of what I had lost.

While at Tuticorin I was guilty of the providence of standing as surety for certain shop-

keepers, who took large advances from a branch of the Bank of Madras at Tuticorin. Though these advances were generally paid, I was left in the lurch on one occasion ; one of the creditors dishonouring the bill that was drawn upon him by the bank. I had to borrow money and repay the security debt, and learnt the value of the precept in the Bible, which advises people not to strike hands as surety for one's neighbours.

The most memorable event that happened while I was quartered at Tuticorin was the visit of the Prince of Wales, the late King Edward. A very grand pavilion was erected in his honour. The reception was carried out on an unprecedented scale of magnificence. I was placed next to the Raja of Ettiyapuram and very close to the Prince. I can never forget the grand sight when all the nobles of the district were assembled in their best and brightest array. That section of the South Indian Railway which runs between Tuticorin and Trichinopoly was opened by the Prince. On that occasion also a very impressive reception was given to him at Maniyachi by the Christians in the district, in which two bishops, sixty clergymen and about eight thousand Christians were present.

In passing, I may also mention that my first two sons were born at Tuticorin. The eldest was born when I was practising there as a Pleader. My knowledge of the Indian Evidence Act proved useful on that occasion. Applying the principle of 288 days laid down there, I had expected and foretold the arrival of the baby on a particular date. That morning there was no sign of the

child, but in the evening it made its appearance verifying the figure given in the Act. When my second son was born I was in practice in Palamcottah, but my father-in-law was a Deputy Collector in Tuticorin and had built a house and there the event happened. The mother, however, passed through a very serious illness after the birth of the child, which kept us in suspense and anxiety for many weeks. It eventually partially deprived her of the power of hearing.



REV. W. T. SATHIANADHAN.

CHAPTER V

LIFE AT PALAMCOTTAH

DIFFICULTIES AMONG CHRISTIANS

*Not unto us O Lord, Not unto us
but unto Thy name be the glory.*

I TURN with gladness to my career in Palamcottah which began in 1878, when I was enrolled as a Vakil of the District Court with the privilege of appearing in all the courts in the Tinnevely district, and moved into Palamcottah for the purpose of enlarging my practice. Mr. Carr was the Judge in Tinnevely at that time. He was vested with absolute authority to give or refuse a *Sanad* to any one wishing to engage in legal practice in the courts in that district. He had an idea that the Bar was getting full even then and was, therefore, very particular about enrolling new practitioners, sometimes refusing *Sanads* even to graduates with B.L. degrees. He was, however, very kind and considerate in my case and was not only willing readily to enrol me, but made a little speech from the Bench on the occasion on which I first appeared before him, saying that it was a position of great honour, independence and responsibility to which I was called and that he felt sure that I would be worthy of my vocation. This was due to the fact that I had already made some name for myself at Tuticorin, but principally to the recommendations of Mr. Annasamy Mudaliar, then Sub-Judge at

Palamcottah, who was a friend of my father-in-law, Mr. Ganapathy Pillai, and took very great interest in our family. I shall not deal *in extenso* in this chapter with my success in the profession, or the place I took in the public life of the town and district, as this book is intended to deal mainly with the religious aspects of my life. From this point of view Palamcottah was as full of favouring influences as Tuticorin had been the contrary.

In the first place, Palamcottah had a large Christian population amongst whom I reckoned some as my most intimate friends and well-wishers. My natural anxiety to earn their goodwill and favourable opinion kept me from many of the faults into which I was insensibly gliding at Tuticorin. The good counsel and the high example of so many men of good and noble character were an incentive to me to look more carefully into my own life and to cultivate higher standards of behaviour and conduct. The Church life, too, in Palamcottah was much more practical and favourable to piety and high endeavour. There were a number of English missionaries, who set forth high ideals of public and private conduct by their discourses and more particularly by the example of their lives. Bishop Sargent, who was then at the height of his ability and influence, was a great figure in Palamcottah. I regularly attended the services in the Tamil and English churches and faithfully took down in my note-books the excellent sermons delivered by Bishop Sargent and others. In the morning service at the Tamil Church he invariably preached very valuable sermons. I also took a prominent part in religious and

Church meetings and regularly attended the Communion Service once a month. I purchased at this time a considerable number of religious and devotional books and read them on the Sabbath, a day which I now faithfully observed. I was friendly with the missionaries, whose good-will towards me and approval of my character were further incentives to spiritual progress. I consider that the individuals who influenced me most in this period were, among Englishmen, Bishop Sargent and the Rev. T. Walker, and among Indians Messrs. Krishna Pillai, Muthia Pillai, and Mr. Jothinayagam Pillai. I also moved on terms of intimacy with Mr. J. D. Savariraya Pillai, Mr. Shunmuga Sundaram Pillai and other men of my own age.

FRIENDSHIP WITH BISHOP SARGENT

Bishop Sargent arrived in Palamcottah in the year 1838, and helped substantially to build up the Church as I found it when I arrived at Palamcottah. He was regarded and looked up to with reverence, as the patriarch of the Christian community. He also evinced a paternal interest and solicitude in the members of his large family and especially in myself. He was always very friendly with me : he asked for and accepted my counsel in important matters and treated me with very great cordiality and kindness. On one occasion he invited me to spend a week with him at Tekkumalai, a hill station four thousand feet high in the neighbourhood of Courtallam and I cannot easily forget his cheerful courtesy and friendliness towards me at that time. Though unused to English ways of eating and living, and put

to some discomfort on that account, I greatly enjoyed his company and religious conversation. He sent relays of students to meet and receive me at different stages on the way, and, when I was within a mile's distance of the bungalow, he himself came and welcomed me very warmly and treated me throughout my trip more as a son or brother than as a comparative stranger. In later days he always used to raise his hat when he met me, and treat me with a degree of respect in other matters which was regarded as unusual. This was more striking, as in various questions such as the necessity to give higher education to Christians, the provision of seats in the church, the retention of the *kudimi* and so forth, I did not see eye to eye with him.

Later on I had the privilege, which I greatly appreciated, of spending a week with Mr. Walker as his guest. Mr. Walker was undoubtedly one of the ablest and most saintly missionaries, who ever came to this district, and his name will not be easily forgotten. He was such a learned man in Tamil and Sanskrit, as well as in several European languages, and such a powerful preacher, that from the beginning I entertained very great admiration for him. He, too, strangely enough always treated me with special regard and, when he was in Tinnevely, often sought my counsel and co-operation in the affairs of the Church.

APPEAL FOR MISSIONARIES TO WORK AMONG EDUCATED HINDUS

There were some important events in those days to which I should make a passing reference. Many

of us were convinced that the missionaries then in Palamcottah were not equal to the task of evangelising Hindus belonging to the higher castes and possessing some degree of culture ; and we prepared a petition to the Home Committee, which was extensively signed, requesting them to send out men of better calibre and a higher degree of education. It was in response to this appeal that a succession of University men, mainly from Cambridge, were sent out to Tinnevely. Messrs. Walker, Finnimore, Carr, Douglas, Storrs, Scott, Price, Sheldon and Hawkins came to Palamcottah within the next few years, and greatly added to the incentives to higher life in the district. The foundation of a separate college in the town of Tinnevely to provide an advanced education on Christian lines for Hindus of high caste, and for the growing Christian community was also the result of a similar move on our part. Previously there was no organized means of reaching the Brahmins and Vellalas in that big town.

A few missionaries in those days were not in favour of giving higher education to Christians, for the ostensible reason that they would take up secular occupations. Those of us, on the other hand, who had tasted of the blessing of educations were very anxious that the further development of the community should not be stunted in the interest of any particular policy. We pressed hard for the provision of high schools and colleges throughout the district. I look back with gratification to the measures that we then devised, as they have more than justified themselves in the tremendous

advance achieved by the Christian community in Tinnevely.

AGITATION AMONG LOCAL CHRISTIANS ABOUT PEWS, BANNS AND CASTE.

At this time only the English and Indian clergy had seats in Trinity Church at Palamcottah, and the rest of us, high and low, were expected to squat on the ground. The arrangement was probably found suitable at a time when most of the people who attended church were subordinate mission employees ; but it was exceedingly irksome for those of us, who could obtain seats before any of the higher officials in the district, to put up with this slight (as we then thought it) in our own church. Those among us who had attained to fairly respectable positions in life applied for chairs in the church. The authorities thought it would be an invidious task to provide some men and women with seats and to ask others to sit down on the floor and so they provided pews for all, some however of a better class than others. This arrangement was not acceptable to the applicants, who had asked for exceptional treatment and found themselves put on the same footing as others, so there was a movement to erect a separate church, which, like a similar attempt which was made later on, when caste titles were dropped in the publication of banns, fell through, as it deserved to and as I personally desired that it should. Owing to the agitation carried on by the Rev. J. A. Sharrock of Tuticorin, the Church authorities suddenly took it into their heads to alter the manner in which the banns were called, the

caste titles both of the father and son being simultaneously left out, so that, for instance, it would be announced that Muthiah, son of Krishna, was to be joined in the holy bonds of matrimony with Mary daughter of K. A. Rajappan. I told the missionaries that it was obviously offensive and that not the contracting parties' titles, only; but those of their parents' should also be omitted. I suggested that the parents' names should be left out altogether, and that the names of the parties who were to be married need alone be called out. This suggestion has been adopted since.

The caste question has been agitated again and again in different forms and with different degrees of virulence. It cannot yet be said to have been finally solved. There was, however, a controversy of a serious nature at this time to which I cannot omit all reference. A member of the Nadar caste published a pamphlet in which it was claimed that all Shanars were Kshatriyas, and that, therefore, they were higher in the social scale than members of all castes except the Brahmins. This aroused a storm of controversy, and one Senthinatha Ayyar, a Jaffna Brahmin, then in Tinnevely, replied to this claim in a book known as *Chan Kshatriya Presanda Marutham*. Though this was written in more or less sober language, a violent reply was published, which was entitled *Chandinada Iyeruku Cherupadi* ('Beating Senthinatha Ayyar with Shoes'), in which Vellalas were attacked in unmeasured terms. Some of the leading Vellalas were deeply incensed by this unwarranted attack and filed a complaint of defamation against the writer. Though I myself was not

without some feeling of resentment, I was not in favour of an action being launched, as I feared it would merely expose the dissensions in the Christian Church to our Hindu neighbours; but I was overpowered by the strong feeling of several of my friends, and, on their behalf, a case was filed and conducted by me which was successful both in the two Lower Courts and in the High Court. I may say here that it has always been my aim to avoid barriers between Christians and non-Christians and between different sections of Christians themselves, and to move on friendly terms with all men, irrespective of caste or creed. In those days missionaries did their best to prevent all social intercourse between Christians and the Hindus related to them, for fear that these Christians might relapse.

The result was that they kept exclusively to themselves, would not mix with the other Christians at the behest of the missionaries and were cut off from all opportunity of influencing their Hindu relatives. I may add that I have published a pamphlet which gives expression to my reasoned conviction that there is no theoretical or historical justification for caste even in Hinduism, and that in its present form it is improper and injurious to society. But the attempt of the missionaries to kill caste in this country reminded us often of that more famous attempt of Mrs. Partington to withstand the sea with her broom.

About this time there was a movement for separate burial grounds for different families. Myself and some of my friends acquired plots, which could be used as private or family vaults, but the mission

aries refused to have them consecrated or to read burial services at them. Though I purchased a ground for myself, I have had no occasion to use it, for I have preferred to have the deceased members of my family buried in the normal Christian form with priestly ministrations.

There were also some who did not care to send their daughters to the Sarah Tucker College to learn along with girls of all classes, but in this matter also I took an independent line of my own and sent my children for their education to the college, which happened also to be situated very close to my own house.

The sober and moderate position that I took up in these and related matters must have created a favourable impression upon the missionaries, who were always friendly towards me and very often made me preside or take a leading part in missionary gatherings and receptions. I remember, in particular, organizing a grand reception for Mr. Wigram, the Home Secretary of the C.M.S., in my own compound when he visited Palamcottah in 1886. I have reason to believe that Mr. Wigram greatly appreciated the splendour of the reception, and was impressed by the numbers, culture and ability of Tinnevely Christians. In particular we gave him an exhibition of the different kinds of lyrics in use in this country and the different methods of preaching employed in the C.M.S.

When the Rev. J. Grubb came to Palamcottah, I arranged special meetings for him in my bungalow and invited all the leading Christians and Hindus in the place to come, when they listened to his

addresses on St. Paul's conversion. When in the course of his address he repeated that message, which St. Paul received on his way to Damascus, 'Saul, Saul, why persecuteth thou me?' in his stentorian voice, accompanying his words with a stamp with his foot, which sounded like a thunder clap, there appeared to be a tremor passing through every one in the hall. The address made a great impression on all present.

SECTION I—EMPLOYMENT AS STANDING VAKIL UNDER THE ZAMINDAR OF ETTIYAPURAM.

FRUSTRATION OF MY PLANS TO VISIT ENGLAND

Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

1 COR. x. 12

I propose now to relate some circumstances which had an important bearing on my subsequent life. When I was a student at Madras, I was always moving on friendly terms with Rev. W. T. Satyanadhan and the members of his family, and when their son, Mr. S. afterwards Doctor Satyanadhan, returned from England, I had occasion to stay with them for a few days. Mr. Satyanadhan gave me such a glowing and attractive description of life at Cambridge, and dwelt so much on the advantages of my proceeding to England, that I made up my mind at his instance to study for the Bar in England, and for three or four years, reckoning from 1880, I was busy saving up money and making preparations for this change in life. However about the time that I ought to have started for England, I was put in charge of three very big suits in connection with the Ettiyapuram Zamindar

which made it impossible for me to realize my ambition. Domestic circumstances also, for instance, the birth of a child and the subsequent illness of my wife, prevented me from starting. The money that I had laboriously saved up was utilized by me in building my bungalow, entitled 'Manorama', at Palamcottah. As it occupies a conspicuous place in the town and is built after a new and attractive pattern, it drew a great deal of attention at the time, being one of the best houses in Palamcottah. From the terrace there is a very fine view of the Tinnevely temple in the foreground, amidst a forest of leafage, and in the far distance the Western Ghats are clearly visible and, in particular, the hill in which the sage Agasthiar is said to have lived and died. Both English and Indian visitors to Palamcottah used to come and look at the house as a matter of curiosity and express themselves as pleased with it. The dedication, or house-warming ceremony, of the house was celebrated in an impressive manner. Both Bishop Caldwell and Bishop Sargent were present, as well as all the European missionaries in the station. The principal officers in the district, as well as the Zamindar of Ettiyapuram, also graced the occasion with their presence. There was a thanksgiving service in the morning, followed by a public entertainment in the evening, which was attended by all the leading Christians and Hindus in the district, including Brahmins and non-Brahmins. This will illustrate the fact that I have always tried to keep in touch and in free social intercourse with every community and section in Palamcottah.

With a view to study for the Bar I had also purchased the law books, which were included in the barrister's course and found them of very great advantage to me in practice. Jurisprudence, which is the science of law, classifies and arranges the various branches or departments of law and lays down the first principles and the relations existing between them, was in particular very valuable, especially as I drank at the fountain head and read Austin's celebrated lectures on the subject. About this time I also used to wear trousers and shoes after the English pattern, and began to keep some of the rooms in my house after the English style. When it was eventually determined that I could not go to England I decided to send my sons or some of them instead. My second son had a brilliant course in Madras and afterwards for four years at Cambridge. My third son left after his degree in Madras for America where he obtained a B.D. degree and then went to Oxford, where recently the valuable degree of Doctor of Philosophy has been conferred on him. My fourth son is also at the present moment in America, studying special branches of knowledge.

WHAT I LEARNT FROM THE ZAMINDAR OF ETTIYAPURAM

Another influence which coloured my life a great deal was my relationship to the Raja of Ettiyapuram. When I was a clerk in that place, I was engaged as a private tutor to the Raja for a few months, and from that time forwards there has been continual friendly relationship between him and me.

When the place of Estate Vakil fell vacant, the Raja was pleased to give it to me. It made a great difference in my life, both because it gave me a permanent income which was available through all the months of the year and also because it gave me a special and peculiar status in the district, the Zamindar of Ettiyapuram being the biggest and wealthiest landlord in the district and owning about 500 villages in it. All the litigation connected with the estate was put in my charge, including two big partition suits which involved several lakhs, of rupees. For the bigger cases I was allowed to engage and bring to Tinnevely leaders of the Bar at Madras like Mr. Subramania Ayyar and Mr. Bashyam Ayyangar, but for all other litigation I was responsible and the Zamindar was so pleased with my work that he reposed the amplest and most thorough confidence in me, besides giving me large fees over and above my monthly retainer.

The Zamindar, who was styled Maharaja by his subjects, preserved a certain amount of state, especially while he was at Ettiyapuram, but he was so friendly with me that he relaxed in my case the high ceremonial which is ordained by custom. When he came to Palamcottah he used to pay visits only to the Collector of the district and to myself. When I went to his palace at Ettiyapuram, though it was considered very unusual, he always used to get up from his seat and came to receive me at the steps. My relationship with him greatly affected my habits of life, making me adopt some of the ways and manners which I found useful and practicable in the lives of Zamindars. For instance, the

Zamindar always used to give audience in the evenings to poets and pandits and musicians of note, appointing a time for them, discoursing with them on their several subjects and making use of the interviews to learn something from each of them. He used to give them handsome presents, if they were strangers in his estate, and made regular payments if they were his own subjects or tenants. I considered that this was a very useful arrangement and, whenever possible, I have always made myself accessible to people with any kind of specialised learning or skill, for the purpose of learning from them all I can. I still remember the pleasurable astonishment with which I listened to the discourse of a very learned Sastri, who undertook to expound to me the principles of Sanskrit rhetoric in two or three hours' time. What a wonderful memory these pandits have. They carry in their minds entire volumes of poetry and sacred literature, and can spread them out to the delectation of astonished listeners at any time of day or night.

A person in the position of a Zamindar has naturally a great many more things to do than a private individual, and has to get a large number of things done by appropriate deputies. Also the skill and wisdom of a big landlord consists in the selection of appropriate agents and in arranging for his business being done by them. Perhaps I have made more use of this idea than any other private person of my acquaintance. Whenever I can get work done through others, I plan and organize the work and lay down rules for their guidance and mark out their tasks; but I leave the execution

absolutely in their hands retaining for myself only the supervision thereof. The result of this arrangement is that, even though my property is of a complicated nature, lying in different parts of the district and exceedingly difficult to manage, the whole of the business connected with it proceeds like clock-work, even though I may be absent for months from Palamcottah. The details of office work are arranged almost with as much precision and clearness as in a Government office and, though the work may not always be done with the highest efficiency (employees having only limited skill), it has been organized to the best of my ability and reduced to system and order.

During my period of office as Estate Vakil I had opportunities of observing the advantages resulting from the system of impartible tenure appertaining to big estates like Ettiyapuram. It does not get partitioned into small lots with every step in the devolution of the family; but remains intact, permitting the owner of it to maintain himself in a higher degree of influence and power and to support his relations and dependents and to give away large amounts to charitable and public purposes. I was myself smitten with the desire to obtain an estate similar in tenure, and the Ettiyapuram Zamindár lent me a sum of Rs. 20,000 to enable me to purchase such an estate. My negotiations to acquire that kind of property, however, were not successful and the money I had saved and taken on loan were invested in the salt factory which now yields me Rs. 6,000 a year. A little later, I became mortgagee and practical owner of seven villages in Mannar-

kotai Zamin and continued in that position for over twenty years and had an idea of acquiring the properties for myself, but the Zamindar has recently redeemed the mortgage so that that object also I was unable to attain. However, I was able to acquire two other villages, one of which I hold under an Inam title and the other is a smaller estate cut out of the Utumalai Zamin, so that at the present moment I am described both as an Inamdar and a Mittadar in the books of the Collector. As I came to be regarded as an expert in the law relating to impartible estates and that concerning the relationship of landlord and the tenant, other Zamindars in the district also became my permanent clients largely increasing the volume of my practice.

COLLABORATION WITH SIR SUBBRAMANI AYYAR AND SIR V. BASHYAM AYYANGAR

An indirect advantage that I derived from being the Raja's Vakil was my close and intimate acquaintance with Mr., afterwards Sir Subbramani Ayyar, who was then one of the leading Vakils in the High Court of Madras and subsequently one of the Judges there. He was a deeply religious and spiritually-minded gentleman with charming and agreeable manners and innate nobility and dignity. He practised high thinking and plain living and always advocated moderation in all things. His spirit was one that that took in the best that was available in the East and the West and fusing it in the life. At his suggestion I built a house for myself at Kodaikanal on the Palani Hills, which was of great benefit to me

physically and spiritually. Though I am not able to occupy that bungalow now, it being at an elevation too high for a person of my age, I have been occupying for ten or twelve years the commodious and the beautiful bungalow, called 'Woodcot' in the neighbourhood of Kodaikanal, which was built by Dr. Subbramanya Ayyar himself. It stands in the midst of a very large area of woodland, nearly 200 acres in extent with several waterfalls and picturesque trees and views. I have often had the benefit of discussing religious and philosophical questions with him, and found that he had always something original, bright or stimulating to say, so that I came back profited and edified by my interviews with him. Sir V. Bashyam Ayyangar, his great contemporary, who also afterwards became a Judge of the High Court, was likewise engaged by me for some Ettiyapuram cases. He was a lawyer, pure and simple, but a lawyer who brought to bear the deepest and profoundest analytic skill and thinking upon his cases, and spared no pains to look at them from all possible points of view, so that he might deal with them from that one which was most advantageous. From him also I obtained inspiration for my work as a lawyer, though in other matters there was little in common between us.

Before I pass on I may mention, descending from great things to small, that the Raja bestowed one of his servants upon me. He has continued with me for more than forty-three years. He has accompanied me faithfully wherever I have gone and has given me the most intelligent, devoted and

patient service that a servant can yield to his master. When I travel or go to other places he saves me all trouble as he knows my ways so well.

I have already said that I was insensibly gliding into the habits and ways of Zamindars and adopting their ways of living and behaviour. When I was in middle life, for instance, I purchased an original type of carriage with a top somewhat like that of an ornamental palanquin but exceptionally beautiful: When harnessed with my cream-coloured horse, the turnout presented a very stylish appearance. I had occasion to purchase a saree worth a thousand rupees, but on the very first Sunday on which my wife wore it for church, the Clergyman there happened to preach against luxury and frivolity in dress and so she refused to wear it any longer more especially as it was very heavy. Articles of luxury, for which I had no use before, like gold and silver jewels and vessels, guns, revolvers, daggers, and other things which I acquired involve me in a considerable departure from the original simplicity with which I started life.

I sometimes like to contrast my early life at Palamcottah with the conditions in which I live at present. After my conversion I had occasion to spend a few months at Palamcottah and found it difficult to get any employment for myself. Mr. Gregory, then Superintendent of Post Offices in the district, employed me as a volunteer in the office at Palamcottah but I received no remuneration for my services. I stayed in the houses of friends and on two occasions, when I fell seriously ill, I felt that I was being neglected and that there

was no one to take care of me. When I compare with that condition the comfortable circumstances in which I have lived in Palamcottah throughout the rest of my life and all the luxuries and pleasures now at my command, I am filled with infinite thankfulness to Him who said that 'he that forsaketh father, or mother or brother or sister for my sake shall be abundantly blessed in this life and receive a crown of righteousness in the next.'

SECTION 2—VISITS TO HILL STATIONS

We know that all things work together for good to them that love God. Romans viii. 28.

Between 1875 and 1890 I was drifting into a secular or worldly view of things and subjected to many temptations by the world, the flesh and the devil, though I was still regular in my private devotions and public observances. My great aim during this period was to make a splash in life, build up a family and fortune and take a prominent and leading part in public life. I built a substantial house for myself and was very proud of the encomiums lavished upon it by others. I attended the National Congresses held in Madras in 1886 and in Bombay in 1888, and purchased lands and villages in various corners of the district. A change, however, came over me after 1890 and made me anxious to retire from business and to devote myself entirely to religious service. The principal factors in bringing about this change in life were certain ailments from which I suffered and my visits to the hill stations.

SERIOUS ILLNESS AND CONSEQUENT
HEART SEARCHING

In 1890 my best client, who was also as already mentioned the patron to whom I looked up for the betterment of my worldly prospects, namely, the Zamindar of Ettiyapuram died, at the early age of thirty-three, of diabetes. This came as a great shock to me as I had been intimately associated with him for about twelve years. The Zamindar had always reposed complete confidence in my advice, as I took the greatest possible trouble in connexion with his work, and I was treated more as a friend than as his man of business and lawyer. I went to Ettiyapuram when he was in a dangerous condition and was present at the funeral ceremony; but was so much affected by the event that I myself fell seriously ill, so much so indeed that my very life was in danger for some time. During the long period of convalescence—nearly a month—that followed, I had opportunities of reviewing my past life, and realizing that my early spiritual enthusiasm and fervour had vanished and that I had gradually slid into a state of worldliness and secularism. It was a period of much searching of heart and sincere contrition and repentance with me, and this and a permanent ailment which attacked me not long after made me revise my ideals and hark back to my early spiritual aims and aspirations. From and after the year 1895, I considered that my main purpose in life was something higher than to make money, or to win a great name, and I felt that it was my duty to retire altogether from business and public activities so

that I might devote myself to the ministry and service of God. Though I was not able to achieve my object at once, I esteem it a great privilege and blessing that my mind became slowly prepared for it by prayer and meditation, and that I was enabled to retire altogether in the year 1901, after about twenty-five years strenuous activity as a member of the legal profession.

TRIPS TO HILL STATIONS AND THEIR EFFECT ON MY CHARACTER AND LIFE

Of even greater service in bringing about this change in my life was a series of visits paid by me to the hill stations. I went twice to Ootacamund, the first time I think in 1886 and the second in 1890, and later on in 1896 I built a house for myself at Kodaikanal, after paying a preliminary visit to that hill station in 1894. From 1896 onwards I have regularly spent a month or two at Kodaikanal or its suburb, Shenbaganoor, and since my retirement as much as three months every year in one or other of these places. It may be an indication of the change in my point of view, that I called the first house which I built in Palamcottah, in 1886, 'Manorama,' which means happiness or contentment and the second one at Kodaikanal (built in 1896) 'Ebenezer', which signifies 'stone or monument of God's help.' The third house that I had occasion to erect in 1906, is at Courtallam and, as I had then come to realize some of the peace which a religious life alone can give, I called it 'Shanthi Sadhan' or Peace Lodge.

The only houses I have erected since then have been two churches or houses of God in my two villages of Rajapudùkudy and Sembankulam.

I have always been peculiarly sensitive to the beauties of landscape and scenery, which lift one's thoughts insensibly from Nature up to Nature's God and enables one to realize the sublimity and majesty of the Divine Being. During my two visits to Ootacamund I scarcely ever stayed at home, except during meal times. I was out nearly the whole day, exploring every pathway and recess on the hills, and drinking in both health and the beauty of the scenery with every breath I took. The fresh air gave me a feeling of exhilaration and joy and made me thankful for life and all the blessings it brought and, whenever I climbed to some hill top or other coign of vantage, I sat down to meditate and pray to Him who had spread and unfolded His majesty on those hills. I came back not merely brighter and better physically for the change but spiritually a new man. During my first visit certain Salvation Army Officers were holding meetings at Ootacamund and these I diligently attended. Their fervour and piety and the great sacrifices they had made in the cause of God, their inspiring addresses and their hearty friendliness moved me greatly. The Salvation Army was then new to India and I was greatly touched by their songs and meetings and by their manner of living. Some of the songs that I then learnt used to be on my lips for many years, and one of them in particular often comes back to me after the lapse of thirty-two summers.

I remember that Commissioner Booth Tucker, who was then in supreme command of the Army's operations in India, delivered such a powerful address that I was almost induced to go to the penitential form and take the vow of a soldier, renouncing all my property and family. I am not sorry that I did not make the renunciation as God in his mercy has been pleased to bless my subsequent life in a marvellous manner, and especially my life after retirement, as I shall relate later on.

When I visited Kodaikanal in 1894 and 1896 and the succeeding years, I made it a point to attend the conferences and conventions that are held every year in the American Mission Church and I am greatly indebted to them for my further progress in spiritual life. Kodaikanal, as distinguished from Ootacamund, is largely a missionary settlement and a visitor to the former hill station obtains the opportunity of meeting some of the best men labouring for Christ in South India and gathers in blessing and strength from them. All or most of them attend the Conferences and Conventions just mentioned, and each year half a dozen special speakers expatiate upon their personal religious experiences and pass on their blessing to others. I used to take notes of some of the addresses there given and then compare them with my own experience. Until then I knew of the normal life which a Christian ought to lead—a life of renunciation and piety, of strict self-examination and careful walk before God. But it was at these meetings that I came to learn that it was equally the duty and privilege of every Christian to live the

overflowing life—in which a man not only receives blessing and peace and joy for himself, but passes it on anxiously and gladly to those around him. I came in contact with men like Dr. Eddy, Dr. Larsen, and Mr. Pakenham Walsh (lately Bishop of Assam), and was greatly influenced by the other-worldly and self-sacrificing lives of these sons of God and was determined in some measure, according to my ability and strength, to imitate them.

RETIREMENT FROM BUSINESS

I was not able, however, to give effect to my purpose when I was still in business. In the home circle and among my own children I made attempts to communicate some of my ideas and awaken them to a more serious life ; but any continuous endeavour or ministry while I was still in practice was out of the question. The life of a lawyer with all its worries and anxieties and its constant exposure to the seamy and disagreeable side of life had become distasteful to me. I felt that I had done enough for the worldly comfort and prosperity of my family and children. My advancing age and ailments already referred to confirmed me, by God's good grace, in my determination to retire from business. This I did in 1901 and I have never since regretted the step. The loss of income did not affect me, as under the blessing of God there was enough for myself and the members of my family to live in comfort and without anxiety. The freedom from incessant work and worry, the escape from constant travelling and, in its place the ability to spend three months at Kodaikanal and three in

Courtallam in occupations that were congenial to me, above all, the liberty, without interference from the world, to indulge in meditation and prayer to my heart's content have given me a degree of peace and happiness in the evening of my life, which I never anticipated, but which has been granted me as an additional and crowning mercy for which I am ever grateful. My health instead of declining or failing suddenly has continually improved. Though I have had a few periods of illness, now and then, none of them has given me any reason for real anxiety.

I now propose briefly to recapitulate some of the ways in which I have been exerting myself since the time of my retirement. The first question that I put to myself, after I stopped practice, was, 'Why did I become a Christian and am I accomplishing the purpose I had then in view, namely, the salvation of my soul?' When I searched myself and reviewed the events of my career from this standpoint, I became convinced that my life had greatly deviated from its true course. I knew that it could not have been part of God's plan that I should forget Him and become immersed in the details of business. My conscience, that inner monitor whose voice we constantly hear behind us, told me that it could not have been for the attainment of wealth or pride of place among my fellowmen, that God had called me, but that like every other detail of His handiwork I must have been made and converted in order that I might witness or minister to others and thereby glorify His holy name. Doubts came into my mind even with regard to my reconciliation

with God. I wanted to cultivate a conscience void of offence towards God and man and make sure of my own personal salvation ; if not also of those who looked up to me. I wanted, in a word, to be in perfect peace with God. This desire, in a special manner, my retired life has enabled me to realize, and for this I am ever grateful to Him who is the Author of all grace.

CHAPTER VI

LIFE AFTER RETIREMENT

SECTION I—CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM

He that watereth shall be watered also himself. Prov. xi. 25

A TRIBUTE TO MR. WALKER

THERE are many persons who do not know when to retire and whom no warnings, administered to them by their physical condition and no calls received from their spiritual nature, will divert them from the ordinary humdrum life of business and money making. There are others, who after retirement either slide into such hopeless indolence as to shorten their lives, or take on new activities and pursuits, which instead of giving them the needed rest add to their anxieties and weakness. I am thankful to God that in both these respects I was able to follow the course of moderation, and I must here confess that it was in part due to the counsels and good example of the Rev. T. Walker that I decided to retire in the fifty-third year of my life. I have already shown how my mind was prepared for it by the trials through which I had passed in the previous decade. I believe Mr. Walker's action in giving up the reins of power as the Superintending Missionary of the C.M.S., in the district of Tinnevely, when he was in the zenith of his influence and ability, and his retiring to the comparative obscurity of Pannavalai, where with a band of

workers chosen by him he continued directly to appeal to the hearts of the Christians and the Hindus in the neighbourhood, was most potent with me.

I was always specially attached to Mr. Walker, because he was one of the earliest missionaries who came to Tinnevely as a result of our petition to the C.M.S. Home authorities and I was also attracted by his life and character. His high ideals of spiritual life revolutionized the proceedings of the C.M.S. after his arrival. He refused to be a member of the English Club as the lives of some of its members were not as spiritual or elevated as he desired. He discountenanced the habit of helping with funds litigant Christians and Christian individuals. He also took severe notice of people within the Christian Church, who had moral failings such as drunkenness or speculation and had them put out of the Church. His Bible classes, which were largely attended by Christians and Hindus alike, form a landmark in my life and gave me a new idea of the Christian call. After my retirement I spent a week with him at Pannavalai and afterwards at Donavur. On one occasion in the church he gave two chairs, one for myself and one for Mr. Jothinayagam Pillai, while he himself sat in the centre of the crowd on the floor. This instance of humility made a very great impression upon me, as well as the brilliant address that he gave, when one Veerabadra Pillai, a convert under our protection, was baptized by him, the ceremony being followed by a very impressive address on the text 'Christ is my life,' which I may say was his watchword throughout his career. Two other gentlemen who influenced

my life a great deal at this time were Messrs. Jothinayagam Pillai and Sundara Sastrigal and I shall refer to them in the appropriate places.

PREACHING TOURS

In the first year of my retirement I had the privilege along with Mr. T. A. Jothinayagam Pillai, of spending a week at Donavur with the Rev. T. Walker. It was to me a period of spiritual refreshment and joy, not merely because I had uninterrupted communion with that sainted missionary, but also on account of the frequent opportunities I had of testifying to Hindus. Our plan was to appoint a place in one of the surrounding villages and send notices to the intelligent and high caste Hindus residing there to meet us. I witnessed in this manner in several villages, speaking mainly about my conversion and the incidents of my spiritual experience. They invariably listened with the utmost attention and patience. My talk was sometimes followed by a discussion, in which I tried to meet their objections and to carry the argument in favour of Christianity a little further.

Another preaching tour lasted nearly two weeks and was undertaken in the company of the Rev. E. A. Douglas, missionary of the C.M.S., since retired. A man of an enthusiastic temperament and with a great gift for friendship, he threw himself heart and soul into the business before us and called on nearly every important educated man in the towns of Ambasamudram, Tenkasi, and in one or two of the adjacent villages, which we visited for the purpose of getting heart-to-heart discourses on

the subject of religion. Although the clubs in the above two towns are never used for religious discussions, the managers on this occasion placed them freely at our disposal. We delivered a few addresses to the members, according them at the same time full liberty to ask us questions. We had some very interesting discussions with them on religious topics. We also visited some of the rich landlords in the neighbourhood, such as the Zamindar of Singampathi, the Zamindar of Urkad, and Pasulinga Tevar, and they not only gave us every latitude during our interview to give the conversation a profitable turn, but also professed to be interested in what we had said.

CHRISTMAS WEEK EVANGELISM

This plan which I commenced immediately after my retirement was followed by me during the succeeding twelve years, chiefly at Christmas time, in the different parts of the district. I could not of course ask Mr. Walker or Mr. Douglas to follow me in my various peregrinations, but Mr. T. A. Jothinayagam Pillai, my friend and next door neighbour, who, like me, had given up his business and was intent on spending the remainder of his days in the service of his Master, and seemed, therefore, specially selected by Divine providence to be my companion and colleague, accompanied me in these expeditions and helped me by his presence and counsel. There were others also who joined us from time to time, and Christmas week, instead of being a season of hilarious festivity and merry-making as before, was the most fruitful and

joyous of seasons in the year, though it now took an ascetic or self-denying character and became crowded with engagements. Some of the seed thus sown on the way side has subsequently shewed signs of life.

THE PUBLICATION OF 'WHY I BECAME A CHRISTIAN'

In the course of these tours, during which I delivered numerous addresses mainly drawn from my own experience, it occurred to me that I might be making myself useful to a wider circle if I could put the incidents of my life together succinctly in the form of a book and distribute it. With the assistance of Mr. Jothinayagam Pillai, who combined considerable erudition in Tamil with sincere and fervent piety, I soon completed my book *Why I Became a Christian*, which won the approval of several people to whom I showed it. I then published it and circulated it free. I am since rejoiced to find that the ministry of this book has been greatly blessed. Some have come to me as enquirers, whose minds were first set athinking by the perusal of this humble effort of mine; and many more still have written to me professing to have been greatly helped and strengthened by it.

The first edition of this book was published and circulated at my own expense, but the second edition which is also now exhausted was kindly undertaken by the Christian Literature Society. It was suggested to me that a smaller edition of the same book might be useful to a wider circle of readers than the original publication, and accordingly I

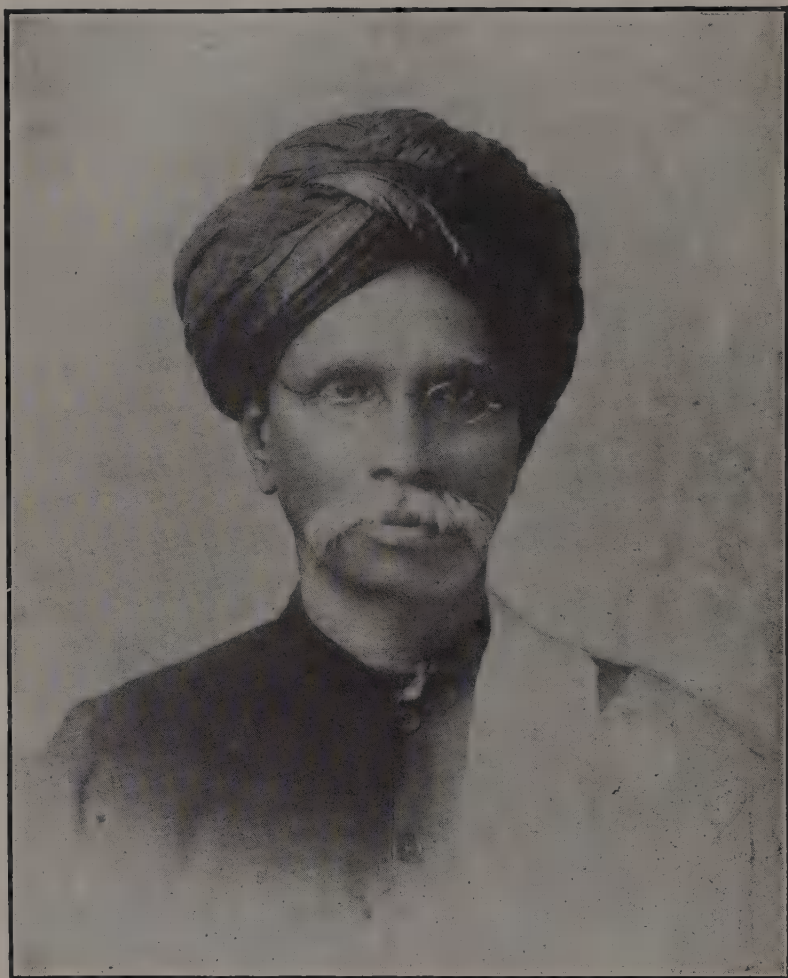
brought out an abbreviation of the same book, of which 6,000 copies were struck off, of which 3,000 were purchased from me and sold by a Trichinopoly missionary, called Mr. Johnson, while the remaining 3,000 are being circulated free, as before, in this district.

MY OTHER WRITINGS

I was so much encouraged by the success of this my first effort at authorship that I have since written various pamphlets and tracts the names of which I give below :—

1. *Idolatry Refuted.*
2. *Holy Life.*
3. *Pilgrim Life.*
4. *The Origin of Caste.*
5. *Athma Gnana Bothini.*
6. *Vanaprastham.*
7. *Letters to relations and friends about Salvation.*
8. *A brief Sketch of the Life of Vidvan H. A. Krishna Pillai.*
9. *Good Death-bed Testimony of Mr. T. A. Jothinayagam Pillai.*

Some of these are intended for the use of Christians and others for Hindus, and I have reason to believe that all alike have been means of blessing to some of their readers. I have prepared a booklet entitled *The Eternal Christ*. Through the kind assistance of the Rev. H. A. Popley, the Evangelistic Forward Movement Committee has approved of it and undertaken to have it published through the Christian Literature Society. I have agreed to purchase



H. A. KRISHNA PILLAY,
The Tamil Poet.

1000 copies for free distribution. It is now printed and awaiting publication. I may also refer to stray articles on subjects of religious interest in papers like the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* and the *I.M.S. Magazine*.

For the benefit of my health I am in the habit of spending three months every year at Kodaikanal and three at Courtallam where I have a small cottage. The season spent at Kodaikanal is to me a period of spiritual as well as physical refreshment and renovation, but at Courtallam I try to make myself useful to others. I used for many years to arrange church services in the small chapel of the station for all the Christians in Tenkasi and follow them up with a short address of my own. Latterly the service has been held in my own little cottage and has been attended not merely by members of my family but also by other Christians who may happen to be visiting Courtallam for the season. Here also I finish up with a short address. I do not know whether others have been benefited by my service and ministry, but, at least, I can say that it gives real joy and strength to myself thus to serve the Lord in the evening of my life. I may add that whenever possible I call upon leading Hindu visitors to Courtallam and take advantage of their comparative leisure while there to inculcate spiritual truths in their minds.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE INDIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY

The foundation of the Indian Missionary Society has been another splendid opportunity for service,

Strange to say there was a good deal of opposition on the part of the missionaries in the district and mission employees to this worthy project, chiefly on the ground that it would affect the income of the Church, but some of us, including Mr. (now Bishop) Azariah, were convinced that the time had arrived for the Tinnevely Church to make itself responsible for direct evangelistic effort and we, therefore, met week after week in the Mission Rest House opposite Edward & Co.'s premises and prayed for several months regularly for God's guidance and blessing on our project. The Rev. T. Walker helped us at this stage and brought over the other missionaries to our side, and in order to enlist and maintain their interest, we gave the Missionaries prominent places in our committees and councils and induced them to exhort all the Churches under their control to subscribe to the Mission. I need not say that the blessing and favour of God have rested in abundant measure on this effort, started in His name and for His glory and that the movement has amply justified itself. From its inception down to the present day I have regarded it as a privilege that I have been able to give it much of my time and thought. Besides regularly attending the meetings of the Executive Committee of which I am President, I have used the annual meeting as an occasion for throwing out suggestions as to some new line of development or new type of service, which could be adopted in connection with the Mission. The office bearers, the Treasurer and Secretary and the missionaries often come to consult with me about various matters connected with their

work and in this way also I have been able to be of some small service to the Society. After my retirement I acquired a village called Sambankulam or Subbiahpuram in the Tenkasi Taluk. When I purchased it, it was involved in litigation, both the Zamindar and the tenants giving the greatest possible trouble to the Mittadar or owner of the village. A series of law-suits had to be instituted and fought up to the High Court; but by the blessing of God all these actions ended successfully and the village is now in a settled condition. As I acquired this property after my retirement, I have considered it proper to devote the income derived from it entirely to God's service, except such as may be wanted for the improvements of the village itself and the payment of taxes and rents. I have erected a church in the village which was dedicated for Divine worship by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Waller. Some portion of the proceeds of the property is sent annually to the Indian Missionary Society. Latterly I discovered that the purchase of a piece of land near Dornakal, the headquarters of the Indian Missionary Society in the Nizam's Dominions for a sum of Rs. 400 or 500, would constitute a permanent or perpetual endowment for a catechist to be employed in that Mission. Accordingly I have been able out of the income of Subbiahpuram permanently to support some catechists in the Nizam's Dominions. During the recent famine, the poor people in Dornakal wanted pecuniary help to tide them through the period of distress and I have been able to assist them from the income of the village. It is rather a curious circumstance that

out of the income of this village, which is dedicated (as its name indicates) by the Uttumalai Zamindar with certain fixed charges to the Hindu god Subramania Swami, the earliest object of my devotion, I am able to help Missions in such distant places. I am also glad to think that soon after the formation of the Indian Missionary Society of Tinnevely, I helped along with Dr. Eddy and others in planning and organizing for the whole of India, a comprehensive inter-denominational Society, called the National Missionary Society, on whose Council I have always been a member besides being a regular contributor to its funds.

MY WORK AMONG PROSPECTIVE CONVERTS

Another opportunity of service of which I have diligently availed myself is the entertainment and teaching of the inquirers who were likely subsequently to become converts to Christianity. Even before my retirement several of these were my guests, sometimes for long periods, but I was not then able to attend much to their spiritual requirements, or to give them any systematic teaching. I am glad to think that after my retirement I have been able to spend more time with them and to supervise their study and enquiry more carefully, though I have not always been able for family reasons to entertain them in my own house. I set apart an hour in the afternoon (usually 3 to 4 p.m.) for this work, and employ it in drawing out their mind and conscience, examining them upon what they had read and directing their thought in the most fruitful channels. In all these matters my spiritual

friend and brother in Christ, Mr. T. A. Jothinayagam Pillai, was of the greatest assistance to me. The main work of teaching and entertaining the enquirers was cheerfully undertaken by him as he had even more leisure than I had. These converts have come from all castes and are of many types and dealing with them has given me an insight into their ordinary difficulties and the normal history of the inquiring mind.

CONVERSION OF SOME OF MY SERVANTS

No man it has been said is a hero to his valet. Our domestic servants often watch us during moments when we keep least guard over ourselves and are, therefore, as a class not easily reached by the influences of religion. All the same we cannot help feeling that one of the principal opportunities of our lives is being carelessly lost, if we take no steps to help them and change their lives for the better. I have, therefore, made it a point to address myself to them, just as I do to others, in the matter of religion. The fact that most of them have been with me for long periods and grown grey in my service has helped me. A woman servant, who was with us for over forty years and helped to bring up each of my children in succession, was baptized five or six years before she died. She was a changed woman in many respects and she exhibited much greater control over her tongue and temper than she did before her conversion. She had such confidence in me that she left her savings which amounted to a considerable sum to be distributed by me, which I did to the advantage of the members

of her family and for some Christian charities. Three other women servants were also baptized, of whom two are very good Christians. My faithful man servant who has served me with loyalty and devotion for forty-five years is not yet converted ; but is disposed to hear the Word and joins in our family worship. One of my gardeners, who was with us for over fifteen years, became a Christian with his entire family and continues to attend the offices of the Church with devoutness and regularity.

THE CONVERSION OF MY SISTER

I have also made serious efforts at different times to bring home the truths of the Gospel to my near relations. My sister Maragadam (Emerald) is the only person who responded to my appeals. She became a Christian with her three children and these have all been abundantly blessed of God in their different walks of life.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE OTHER MEMBERS OF MY FAMILY TO CHRISTIANITY

Both my parents were of a serious turn of mind and I am firmly convinced that though they did not become Christians, I shall meet them in the other world and continue the good offices which I tried to do to them in this life. My father in particular quite outgrew the popular conceptions of Hinduism and built up for himself a form of Saiva mysticism, one feature of which was the frequent recitation of the sacred formula ' Saravana Bhava.' My discussions with him had, at least, this effect that on his death-bed he confessed that Christ was the Son of

God and the Saviour of mankind. My brothers listened willingly to whatever I had to say to them, but were not prepared to make the great sacrifice for the sake of Christ. My youngest brother came at my request and lived in my compound for over a year, receiving religious instruction from me and others, but eventually saw that the standard of conduct expected by Christianity was too high for him and he could never hope to live up to it. It may not be uncharitable for me here to mention that, while myself and my converted sister together with our children have in every respect been abundantly blessed, those who had not the boldness or the loyalty to truth necessary for an open change of faith have either remained as they were, uneducated and in comparatively poor circumstances or have suffered greatly. It is a matter of life-long regret to me that they cared more for the world that perisheth than for the things that really matter.

Long before the period of my retirement I addressed myself to the members of my family and tried to awaken their conscience and instil into them higher ideals of duty and religious conduct. I entreated them to examine all religions and select what appeared to them to be really true and good, assuring them that their selection would in no way interfere with the cordiality of my relations with them. After the year 1900 I redoubled my attempts to improve their character and spiritual growth and, though I cannot claim to have succeeded completely. My five children are as different from one another in spiritual height as the five fingers of my hand, but this at least can be stated that they are

decorous and orderly in their outward behaviour and regular in performing their devotions in public and private. My wife was always a very staunch Protestant, with a firm hold on fundamentals and a character and life in consonance with her orthodox belief, and she has co-operated with me heartily in every attempt that I have made to improve the tone of the family.

THE FRIENDSHIP OF RAO BAHADUR A. SUNDARA SASTRIAL

I made it a point to visit many educated Hindus of my acquaintance in Tinnevely, Palamcottah and Vannarpet, and to induce them to think about their souls and the claims of Christ, in respect of His Incarnation, Atonement and Resurrection, to be the Saviour of the world. I was always warmly welcomed and treated kindly. I cannot claim that many of them displayed real interest in their own spiritual welfare. In the case of most of them, I discovered that except for performing certain religious ceremonies in a more or less perfunctory manner and observing the rules of their caste, they knew little of their own religion and were entirely ignorant of its deeper and more mystical truths. Rao Bahadur A. Sundra Sastrial, whose early death was recently lamented, was a particular friend of mine and a brilliant exception to the general rule. He was a sincere and genuine man of high ideals and exemplary conduct and had made researches into the sacred books of the Hindus and cultivated Yoga. He was the Government Vakil of Tinnevely for many years and in that capacity earned the

regard and goodwill both of the officials and non-officials there. When I was President of the local club he was the Secretary, and we used to be thrown into each other's society and had frequent occasion to exchange our thoughts and ideas to our mutual benefit. As I had then retired from business, I used to consult him about all public questions and all problems connected with the management of my estate, and always received from him kindly and invaluable advice and assistance. He conducted some suits for me and, in particular, his able and powerful argument before the District Munsiff of Ambasamudram, in connection with the litigation relating to Subbiahyapuram, decided the fate of that suit in my favour and I have ever since been able to enjoy the village in peace. Although a Brahmin he lived with me at Kodaikanal during one or two summer vacations, getting his food prepared in a separate kitchen. A generous and very liberal-minded man, he was one of the useful and permanent influences in my life during this period and I gladly acknowledge my obligations to him. I used to discuss religious matters with him and learnt a good deal in the process. He, together with Sankara Sastrial with whom also I had long and fruitful conversations, may be taken as types of the Smartha School of thought. The former explained the doctrine of Maya, which, as a practical man, I always found it difficult to believe, as meaning that the only Real thing in existence was God and that all other things, men and the universe were transitory and unreal compared with Him or at least less real than He was. This is a point of view which appealed to me

as well as his position (also held by others) that Smarthas are bound to worship God everywhere, even in a Christian church no less than in a Hindu temple. He also tried to avoid the immoral associations connected with the story of Krishna's amours with the *Gopis* by giving the legend an allegorical meaning. The *Gopis*¹ according to him were all Rishis in previous births and the story or allegory was meant to illustrate, under an earthly figure, the tender love which arises between the soul of the devotee and the object of its worship, and the fact that this love is not the monopoly of a single devotee; but that it is shared simultaneously by all his worshippers.

STUDY OF SAIVISM AND CONTACT WITH SAIVITE LEADERS

I was even more interested in the Saiva system and, whenever a distinguished Saiva preacher or lecturer came to Palamcottah, I made it a point to listen to his discourses and, if possible, to discuss religious questions with him afterwards in private. I remember in particular Vedachala Swamy of Madras, Mr. Ponnambalam Pillai of Trevandram, Gurunatha Sastry of Ettiyapuram, Vairavanatha Pillai of Kulasekarapatnam, and Sri Sivagnana Yogi of Virudupatti, with all of whom I have had the privilege of conversing. Mr. Vairavanatha Pillai of Kulasekarapatnam, a well-known preacher of Saiva Sidhantism, with whom I had the advantage of discussing the principles of that form of faith,

¹ The concubines of Krishna, an incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu.

paid me the compliment of saying that I really understood it better than most Sidhantists of his acquaintance and that, in his opinion, on account of my attainments and knowledge, I could be reckoned a 'Jeevan Muktha.'

The Saiva system has many attractive features : it emphasises the oneness of God and has worked out in detail the relation of the individual soul with God, both being regarded as separate entities. It also provides for the ecstatic or rapturous contemplation and love of the Heavenly One by the devotee. Sin is regarded as coeval with God and as a thing which can be got rid of only by the attainment of *Moksha* (Redemption), which moreover is not regarded as attainable only after eighty-four million births, but can be reached as the reward of a single life of self-discipline and virtue.

Some learned Christian authors regard the Sidhanta system as the nearest approach to Christianity in Hinduism : Siva, his son Subramania (who is even more an object of devotion with Hindus than Siva himself) and Uma, corresponding respectively to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost of the Christian Trinity.¹

With a view to reach the younger men and boys I arranged with the Principals of the C.M. College, Tinnevely and the C.M.S. High School, Palamcottah, to give me their Scripture hour, and twice I gave two courses of addresses to the young men in the college and matriculation classes,

¹ See Appendix in which the leading features of the Saiva Sidhanta system are summarised and set side by side with the corresponding doctrines of Christianity.

attempting to cover in a systematic manner, the entire scheme of Christian salvation, contrasting it with the Hindu systems. I have already described the manner in which I attempted to keep in touch with inquirers and converts, about twenty-two of whom have come at different times under my direct teaching and influence. Latterly, Mr. Carr and myself divided between ourselves the burden of maintaining these inquirers and the responsibility for their spiritual preparation. The opening, four years ago, of the Converts Home of which I am President has considerably lightened my burden, but I continue to take the warmest possible interest in converts, intending and actual, and teach them as much as I can. At the present moment I have two young men who are under my instruction.

THE GREAT NEED FOR EVANGELISTIC MISSIONARIES

I have also with the permission of the C.M.S. authorities often delivered addresses to the evangelists, about forty in number, employed by them. Though they are fairly well acquainted with the general truths of Christianity, they are not qualified, either by their general character or piety or by their acquaintance with Hindu beliefs and faith, to make any real headway with intelligent Hindus. My aim has been to improve their outlook in this matter and to help them to take a broader view of their work. I am convinced that the machinery now in use for evangelistic work is entirely inadequate for the task to be accomplished, and that the methods and personnel employed are not suitable.

If the higher castes are to be effectively reached, missionaries of ability and culture should be set apart who could live as did the Rev. R. J. Noble with inquirers as their friends and brothers and influence them by their lives and character. Now the inquirer is treated as a sort of hanger-on who has to wait upon the missionary for interviews, and has little or no opportunity of witnessing the beauty of his Christian life or recognizing any self-sacrifice on his part. The missionary on the other hand who desires to appeal to the masses should give up his administrative work and retire to the villages, living the simple ascetic life which has such a power over our people. He should move among them, as Schwartz and Xavier did in early days, in order to win their souls.

I have referred to the preaching tours organized by myself and carried out sometimes in company with Mr. T. A. Jothinayagam Pillai and sometimes by myself. More recently the Indian Missionary Society has, in addition to its regular evangelistic work in the Nizam's Dominions, begun to take interest in work among neighbouring Hindus, and has organized preaching camps on a large scale. It has invited speakers of exceptional ability like Messrs. Larsen, Eddy, Walker and others to addresses large gatherings in different portions of the district. I have often helped in organizing these tours, supported them with my donations and sometimes myself accompanied the speakers. Generally I have interested myself in all the evangelistic and Church work carried on by the C.M.S., forwarding their scheme of self-support, planning and taking

part in their evangelistic work and giving them the benefit of my experience, such as it is, in their church councils and committees.

I was one of those who ardently supported the project of a Gospel Sunday, during which all the Christians of a congregation should go out to adjoining villages, and spend the entire day in preaching the Gospel in the highways and bye-ways. I have often gone to the villages round Palamcottah, and in some instances to those round Courtallam, and have been able to interest Hindus of the better classes in the subject of Christianity. I also worked very hard in the direction of self-support and threw the weight of my voice and influence in helping the missionaries and the Indian Church to realize a larger and ever larger measure of self-reliance.

THE ERECTION OF CHURCHES IN MY TWO VILLAGES

Reference has already been made to the two churches I erected in my villages known as Rajapudukudi and Subbiapuram. There was a handful of Christians in the former of these two villages, and, at the time when the church was dedicated for public worship by Bishop Williams and the Rev. E. S. Carr, no less than forty persons, old and young, were baptized and admitted into the Christian fold. I have felt in a special manner responsible for the souls of the uneducated people in this village, and have spared no effort to procure for them a proper teacher, who would teach them the first principles of Christianity. Of the various

persons kindly placed at my disposal by the C.M.S. for this purpose, only one man and more particularly his wife have been of real service in influencing the people towards Christianity. The others were men of indifferent capacity or spiritual power. In Subbiapuram, too, there are a few Christians and a catechist to look after them. But we have not yet made much headway in this village which indeed has only recently come into my hands. The schools established in these two places will, I trust, educate the minds and consciences of the children attending them before they get set and hardened by prejudice, and a night school which I presently intend to establish will, I trust, enable me to reach the older people who have never had the benefit of education.

A REMARKABLE ANSWER TO PRAYER

I may here record a remarkable instance of an answer which I received in response to special prayers offered up in connection with my village of Rajapudukudi. During Christmas time one year the rain-fed tank in the village, which supplies more than a hundred acres of nanja or wet land and which is usually full at that season of the year, was absolutely empty. If no rain had been forthcoming not only should I have been put to great loss, but my numerous tenants in the village would have been subjected to untold hardship and misery during the next year. I made this a subject of special prayer both in private and in my family circle for about a week, and then proceeded with my friend Mr. T. A. Jothinayagam Pillai to the

village, which was eighteen miles off and there, standing on the dry fields in the presence of my tenantry, who were very anxious for a suitable supply of water, we again offered up prayers. In a most surprising and marvellous manner, for which we did not fail to thank God from an overflowing heart, there were heavy showers of rain the same evening, followed by other rains on subsequent days, which produced a bumper crop such as we had not had for some years.

RECOGNITION OF MY LOYALTY TO THE BRITISH RAJ

I must say a word in conclusion about the way in which my services have been recognized. The Tinnevely Club, consisting mainly of Hindu officials and Vakils, elected me as its President for five years in succession, and the Government has recently been pleased to confer upon me the title of Dewan Bahadur. Some fifteen years ago when I was busy doing God's work, I was informed that the Viceroy had granted me a special certificate of loyalty and merit. I appreciate the kindly spirit which has prompted these honours, but for their own sake I do not set much store by them. The only reward which I am now looking forward to is nothing that can be conferred upon me by any earthly authority ; but the welcome ' Well done, Thou good and faithful servant,' which I hope to hear some day from the lips of Him to whom I have tried to be faithful in the few things committed to my charge, learning more of the loveliness and beauty of that beatific vision which is the inheritance of

those who have waited for God and loved Him, is my desire.

SECTION 2.—ANTICIPATIONS IN HINDUISM OF CHRISTIANITY

'Prove all things : hold fast that which is good.' 1 Thess.
v. 21

MY discussions with Hindu Pundits and with intending converts to Christianity led to deeper study and more careful consideration of the leading books of Christianity and Hinduism. Fortunately my own religion is not a closed book to me and other Christians, as Hinduism is to most of those who profess to follow it. We read the Bible every day and have its various truths expounded and illustrated from different points of view by our preachers and ministers. The books, therefore, that I read to deepen my knowledge of Christianity were such as set forth the lives and thoughts of those saints, who have enjoyed higher and richer experiences than the rest of us. Similarly I embraced such opportunities as offered themselves of conversing with people like Sadhu Sunder Singh (who was my guest for nearly a month), Kailasa Prasangiar and others who were gifted with exceptional spiritual power. To meet, however, the Hindu on his own ground I have undertaken a deeper re-study of the Hindu books starting from the *Rig Veda* and the ten leading *Upanishads*. I have made special researches into the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy and the works of the great Saiva saints and mystics and into the Yoga system.

KNOWLEDGE OF HIGHER HINDUISM MAKES
A MAN A BETTER CHRISTIAN

The conviction that has been strongly borne in upon me, as the result of such study, is that behind the crude popular religion of the Hindus, there has always been a higher and more spiritual philosophy which has many points of contact with higher Christianity, and from which an enquirer can easily and naturally be conducted to Christianity itself. I would go even further and affirm, with the confidence that comes of personal experience, that the Christian, who studies those old Tamil and Sanskrit mystics, comes back to his own religion with a deeper sense of its sublime truths and a richer peace and joy in his life. It is true that there is in one sense no esoteric Christianity, inasmuch as Christ has stated the fundamental truths of His teaching in the simplest possible terms, so that even children and uneducated persons can become His followers and remain such in a real sense. The belief of the child, however, is not the same as that of a man who has proved every thing and can give a reason for the faith that is in him, nor can the content of a child's Christian experience be in any measure compared with that of mystics like Behmen or Tauler or ripe saints like Francis of Assisi or Francis Xavier. I sometimes think that the average Christian teacher or preacher scarcely rises above the A B C of Christianity in his teaching, for the simple reason that in his own life he has only reached the A B C of Christian experience,

STUDY OF THE OLD VEDA NECESSARY
FOR THE FOUNDATION OF THE NEW

Let me give illustrations of both these positions. We are accustomed to think that Hinduism is a grossly polytheistic religion, and that, in order to lay the foundation for the doctrine of the one God, we must build anew on the basis of its reasonableness and of the unreasonableness of the rival belief. It is true that the original *Rig Veda*, even though it was written before the differentiation of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva (who are barely mentioned), speaks of gods many and lords many, Varuna and Indra, Yama and the Asvins, and so on. But in later *Mandalas* the Rishis slowly grope towards the idea that, after all, these gods, which merely represent different powers of nature, like the sun and the sky, could have had no independent existences, but must have derived their special qualities and powers from one inscrutable Being behind them who is invisible to human sense ; but who expresses Himself in forms and qualities that can be apprehended by the human faculties. From the idea of this one God, Sankaracharya, professing to follow Brahaspati and Badarayana, later evolved the doctrine of pantheism which, with its concomitant doctrine of Maya, envelopes Indian thought as in a haze of mist. The passage, however, from the unity of the Vedic god to the Christian Divinity is much easier ; and it is this, I have no doubt, that the Rishis had in mind when they sang of the One behind the many, immanent in all things, manifesting Himself in Divine forms of beauty and with divine powers. The later pantheism destroys human individuality and the

responsible will, and makes way for a blind karma in the toils of which the Hindu has been caught and enfolded without the means of extricating himself. There is no distinction in it between right and wrong, because all the acts of sentient beings are the acts of the god in him, and have been preordained by primordial laws or an iron fate, which it is possible to fear but not to avoid. Such an idea would have been scouted by the early Aryan Rishis, who came of a fearless, conquering and progressive stock and did not, as their descendants do, give way to the worship of demons and devils in their feeling of helplessness and dismay before the powers of nature. I should say, 'Study the old *Veda*, if you want to lay the foundation for the true or new *Veda*, which teaches us about an all-powerful God, the author of all things who is as rich in love and mercy as He is in power and majesty.'

EVIDENCE IN RIG VEDA FOR THE DOCTRINES OF THE LOGOS AND THE ATONEMENT

The idea of the incarnation of God is also one for which the foundations have been laid broad and deep in Hinduism. If the aim is to convince Hindus of this doctrine, it is easier to take their own teaching and pass from it to the true doctrine, divested of all crudities, than to commence by destroying all Hindu views, and to start building anew from scepticism, a task which it is well nigh impossible to perform. The religious Hindu more easily becomes a religious Christian than a sceptic, who has been taught to doubt every item of the Hindu belief, and who approaches religion in a

spirit of cold and suspicious criticism. All Hindus believe that at sundry times and in diverse manners God has taken on animate and often human forms, in order to rid the world of evil or to accomplish some great Divine purpose. Who has not heard of the ten Avathars of Vishnu, or the forms into which Siva used to pass to help his devotees? It is true that they think only of a portion of God thus manifesting himself in his avatharas and that the stories, relating to the forms taken, and the purposes meant to be fulfilled are often enough grotesque and misleading. But the idea is there and it is not difficult to show a Hindu that God can take on human form in order to accomplish a gracious purpose, which he had in view for the good of mankind. The surprising thing is that we have not got to wait till the *Brhamanas* or the later *Puranas* for obtaining the original Hindu doctrine of Incarnation. The Rishis of the *Rig Veda* sing of Hiranya Garbha, the golden egg, or 'the golden child, who was born Lord of all.' 'He created everything and asked the question *to whom shall I sacrifice.*' In this verse is found the germ of two well known Christian doctrines: that of Christ the Logos who was before all things and from whom all things created were made: and the doctrine of atonement or redemptive sacrifice, which is put forward by many Hindus as the stumbling block in the way of their acceptance of Christianity. If the passage above quoted is interpreted in the light of what follows, it will be admitted that the old Rishi had more than a passing glimpse of the true Christ, and that the modern Hindu who professes to regard

every line of the *Veda* as sacred cannot but admit that the foundation was laid, so far as India was concerned, for faith in Christ by its own Rishis, long before Saint Thomas or any other Christian missionary came to India.

THE EXPERIENCES OF HINDU MYSTICS JUST AS REAL AS THOSE OF CHRISTIAN SAINTS

As regards the other position, it is a fortunate circumstance that the writings of some of the Saiva mystics, like Gnanasambandar and Manikkavasagar, are now being translated into English verse ; and that all those scriptures are available in a form which renders it easy for any ordinary Tamil student to understand them. Any one who has read these old writers will be forced to admit that Western religion is not a very different thing from Eastern religion. Religion does not differ according to the colour of the devotee or the continent in which he lives. Our own Rishis and poets have had the same visions as David the Psalmist or Catherine the Mystic. Their religious experiences were just as real and just as profound as those in the West. Who according to these writers is the virtuous man ? ' He is one who controls and coerces the passions within him so as to conform his actions to Divine Laws.' Who on the other hand is the holy man ? ' He is one in whom a passionate enthusiasm absorbs and annuls the passions altogether, so that no internal struggle takes place ; and the lawful action, or that which present itself first, seems to be the one most natural and most easy to be done.' Holy is defined in these books as ' free from sinful affec-

tions and characterised by religious principles.' Happiness is described as 'constant occupation in congenial work with the full exercise of our powers and with a continued sense of progress.'

There can be no doubt that these saints, who thus wrote and sang, must have passed through many of the same experiences as Christian saints and thought the same thoughts. In their life of prayer and contemplation too they achieved the same emotional levels, as the great Christian mystics. Here is an account of the prayer life of one of them, 'Thought was not. In enjoyment it expires. No thanks he breathed. He preferred no request. Rapt in the still communion that transcends the imperfect offices of prayer and praise, his mind was a thanksgiving to the power that made him. It was blessedness to love.'

In this connection I feel it laid upon me to testify that these are the ideals at which I too have aimed, and which I have been permitted in some measure, with whatever personal limitations and imperfections, to attain according to the grace given unto me. I have come to believe that prayer is the normal life of the soul, and that the heart which occupies itself in prayer enjoys perfect health and the brightest and purest happiness. For such prayer no stated places or postures or fixed hours are necessary: the time spent on it is never measured or felt as spent. The soul is absorbed in the communion with the universal Spirit. It passes through all the four stages described in Hindu philosophy. There is no necessity to ask for things, for the soul has risen above all earthly want or desire, and

anything that is needed, nay much more, is liberally bestowed by an all-Provident God.

There is not much need for crying over sin committed; because the A B C stage, in which the uncontrolled will constantly lapses into evil, has long been left behind and sins committed, if any, are repented of at once and washed by the cleansing blood. There is no interest except in God and His kingdom; no thoughts except such as those put into the soul by God, who perfects the good work already commenced; no feelings, no imaginations, except those for which He is responsible, there being no sinful will to resist them.

There are ejaculations, there are conversations, there are praises and expressions of joy and the Spirit seems to act in union with the human soul. I can now understand the mystic meaning of that wonderful expression used by St. Paul, 'We all beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the spirit of the Lord.'

The prayer life becomes a mirror for reflecting the Heavenly image; and every time it is experienced new reflections appear perfecting the image. It is thus described in a Hindu Scripture :—

A shining charming mirror this,
A Heaven reflecting mirror this,
A causeless endless mirror this,
A knowledge giving mirror this,
A pain relieving mirror this,
A sin destroying mirror this,
A silent speaking mirror this.¹

¹ The R.V., I think, translates this differently, 'reflecting' not 'beholding'. *The Hindu idea of prayer is that of a mirror for reflecting heaven.*

1. ஜோதி மயமாக என்னை சொக்குங் கண்ணாடி,
 சொருபநிலை ஈதெனவே தோற்றும் கண்ணாடி,
 ஆதியந்தமிலா அமலக் கண்ணாடி,
 அறிவுருவாகு மிந்த அசங்கக் கண்ணாடி,
 வாதனையெல்லாம் ஒழிக்கும் இந்த வஸ்துக் கண்ணாடி,
 முன்னேவினை யெல்லாம் முறுக்கும் கண்ணாடி,
 மூதுரைவாக்கும் இந்த மோனக் கண்ணாடி.

I am glad to be able to testify that the perusal of this old world lore has opened new vistas of thought and experience, which I never suspected of being within the reach of the Christian. It has yielded transports of joy, which are at the opposite pole to the tears of repentance with which we commence the converted Christian life. It was a profound truth which that the old Hindu sage had grasped, when he declared that the god Siva appeared as a Guru to the devotee, who has duly prepared himself by self-discipline and knowledge or by fasting and prayer, and teaches him all knowledge and the truth of all things. St. Paul's teaching takes the soul a stage further. Christ the hope of Glory lives in him, enabling him to think His thoughts, feel as He feels, and work the same acts as He would have worked if he were on earth. The body becomes a Temple of the Holy Ghost who comes to reside in it and direct its every activity. The man who defiles the Temple, grieves the Spirit and drives Him away.

HINDU SAINTS KNEW OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

It was at this period that I made a special study of the Christian teaching as to the Holy Spirit, collating the different passages in the Bible relating

to Him and reading special monographs written on the subject. When I read of the Comforter who was to be sent to us to take the place of Christ and to stay with us to the end to strengthen us, and when further I learnt that all the graces of the Christian character, love, joy, peace, long suffering, meekness, are the fruits of the Spirit, and that we cannot even pray aright without the guidance of the Holy Ghost, I became most anxious to obtain the gift of the Spirit and made special prayers on that behalf. It is said 'Knock and it shall be opened, seek and ye shall find and ask and it shall be given unto you,' and we have also the special promise that 'the Spirit shall be given to such as ask.' These promises were graciously fulfilled in my case and my prayer-life has been greatly enriched and blessed in consequence. I make bold to claim, as the result of the deeper contemplation already referred to and more intense prayer-life, that first God and Christ have become to me living realities, of whose nearness and presence I have been made sensible at special moments in ways past describing; secondly, that I have been blessed with other visions, similar to those of which we read in the Bible in connection with St. Paul, St. Peter and the Saints of the Old Testament; thirdly, that I have been able to live the conquering or overcoming life, getting rid of some of my natural failings or besetting sins such as pride, anger, worldliness, lust. It is stated in the *Book of Revelation* that the overcoming, or victorious life, is only possible to those Churches and individuals who have received the Holy Spirit and abound with it. I have come

to the conclusion, and believe in all humility, that I have been vouchsafed that Spirit which alone can make the soul free and happy. Is it too much to infer that the reason why most people, who profess and call themselves Christians, show so few of the graces of Christian character is simply that they have never received the Holy Spirit and never sought for it; while, on the other hand, non-Christians, who display some of these very Christian traits owe them to the influence of that same Spirit whom God has put into their hearts as His witness? From my study of Tamil philosophic poems like those of *Thayumanavar*, *Tirumoolar*, I am convinced that those same saints knew of the Holy Spirit, and their manner of life and attainments bore testimony to their having received it. St. Paul too says that the Lord has not left Himself without witness in any country.

The Yoga¹ system, which is a sealed book to most Hindus and an object of suspicion to Christians in general, has, if properly practised, the power of unfolding many of the secrets of the prayer-life, and of yielding fresh varieties of spiritual joy. By it the senses are brought under complete control and even the mind or intellect is brought into subjection to the spiritual faculty, until there is nothing left to intervene and darken the communion between the soul and its Maker. Even in its early or elementary stages, which alone I could claim to have reached, it has given me results, visions and a power and peace which I count among my best blessings.

¹ Yoga merely means union with God. The individual soul is in union with the universal Spirit, the Holy Ghost.

SECTION 3.—A REMARKABLE GURU

At evening time it shall be light. Zech. xiv. 7.

Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof.

Eccles. vii. 8

THREE STAGES IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

It appears to me that there are three stages in the spiritual life. The first stage is that in which the Christian is 'converted,' or born again, i.e., when he becomes dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God. This is the stage of compunction and repentance, of godly sorrow which makes him enter into the spiritual life. Most Christians think and act as if this is all that is expected of them. There is, however, a second stage in which the Christian feels it a duty incumbent upon him to pass on to others, the liberty and blessing that he has received, a stage in which he is drawn by love to his fellow men and feels his responsibility towards them, and becomes a missionary or preacher drawing their attention to Christ. This was the conviction borne in upon me by attending the missionary conventions held in Kodaikanal, and I take the liberty to urge upon my fellow Christians the duty of passing on the Gospel message to others. There is, however, a third and still higher stage possible, when the converted Christian becomes baptized into the Spirit and endowed with powers and visions with which he has never been possessed before. Every Christian should hunger for or aspire after this second baptism and the perpetual blessedness which it brings. Then indeed he will realize that the Christian life is not one of sorrow or tears, but one

of strength and confidence and overflowing joy. 'Let every soul be subject to the higher powers' (Rom. xiii. 1). In contemplation and communion the soul is so subjected. 'Put Ye on the Lord Jesus Christ' (Rom. xiii. 14). I do not presume to make any claim to the higher experiences and ecstatic visions, with which devout persons like Sadhu Sunder Singh have been favoured, nor have I ever become so absorbed in ecstasy as to be indifferent to the stings of hornets and the circumstances of material life. But my heart was longing for something higher than what is normally vouchsafed to the eye of faith, and I pleaded before Him His gracious promise that 'to him that asketh it shall be given.' My spiritual thirst has been satisfied. I have been overshadowed by the Holy Spirit and filled with the peace and joy which the Spirit alone can give. Ungodly persons and mere professors never look upon religion as a joyful thing; to them it is service, duty or necessity but never pleasure or delight. I wish to place it on record that there is no delight or earthly joy comparable to the happiness of those whose lives have been over-shadowed by the Spirit. Such joys, such brimful delights, such overflowing thrills do men of faith discover in their Lord that, so far from serving him from custom or necessity or expediency, they would follow him, though the whole world may cast them out as evil.

I have already stated elsewhere that I made a special study of the teaching of the Christian Scriptures as to the Holy Spirit, His relation to the Godhead, His place and function in the universe

and the method and the scope of His operations in the individual human life. In connection with this I also perused carefully the lives of European mystics like Saint Teresa and Saint Francis of Assisi and the works or selections from the works of writers like Bonaventura, Boehme, Tauler and Swedenborg.

A REMARKABLE GURU—HIS PERSONALITY AND HIS INFLUENCE OVER ME

I obtained, however, more assistance and illumination from a near relation of mine, who came of his own accord to spend a season at Courtallam with me, as he was able to appeal to and touch me more closely than the written Scriptures and the distant experiences which I have just mentioned. He is well read in mystic literature and has an extensive acquaintance with all Tamil literature of that variety and has, in moments of solitude and quiet, of which he is a great lover, worked out for himself a special scheme of thinking, which appeared to me to be highly attractive and interesting. His appearance and manner were altogether in his favour, as he is eloquent and persuasive in speech, affable and grave, meditative and prayerful. He providentially met a Guru, when he was thirsting for the knowledge of God and yearning to be with Him. He then engaged in fasting, prayer and penance, with a view to attain to the true knowledge of and sympathy with the Godhead. That Guru anointed him with Sakthi Devi which, according to the Hindu *Shastras*, corresponds in its function and work to the Holy Spirit of the Christian Scriptures.

For three months both morning and evening we conversed together about the merits, advantages and claims of Christianity and Saivism. I tried my best to convince him of the truth and spirituality of the Christian religion in such a way as to lead him to baptism and the fuller graces of the Christian life. He, on the other hand, made out that the baptism administered by the priest in the Christian Church amounted only to water baptism and that there was a higher baptism with fire and the Holy Ghost which he had himself received. He also claimed the power to anoint others and transmit the same Spirit which he had received. Our conversations and discussions continued for about three months, and made me earnest and anxious to obtain the secret of the anointed one. The Kingdom of God he said is not in reading and hearing merely, but in seeing, in finding and in showing to others, and he finds these realized in as great measure in Saivism and among Muḥammadan mystics as in Christian writers. The Holy Spirit appeared in the shape of a dove to our Lord; but He may appear and, according to him, has appeared in other forms to the anointed, and those, who have close fellowship with Him, enjoy communion with God and receive spiritual and even material blessings of a high order.

The summary of his religion and position will be found set out in detail in two books that he has published, one called *The Gospel of Grace*, and another known as *Some things about the Theological Academy*. He is a pronounced Siddhantic Yogin, and does not lay the same emphasis as I do on

spiritual advancement through Christ ; but otherwise I find there were many points in which we held similar views.

Some extracts from his book give a rough idea of his position :—

1. Religion is not talk but realization.
2. Sectarians may wrangle about their differences, but the truth which is shadowed in all religions is possible of attainment only through grace. The way to Salvation is one, all religions agree on this point. That is through obtaining the Holy Ghost and realizing it.
3. The religion of Gnanis begins with Godhead, and they demand that we should cease from all wrangling, from praising one and despising another religion, because there is a substratum of truth in all religions.
4. The re-born man has no more doubts in religion. God to him is tangible, and the word of God is seen, felt, handled and touched by him.

I give a short and succinct account of blissful experiences of mine, which will appear from the translation of the stanzas which I have composed for my own use in devotion and prayer, based on Gnani Thayumanavar, and others, also on the biblical Christian Scriptures. The stanzas are given in the original Tamil in the foot-note.

Joy, Joy, the Spirit's Joy is Joy indeed.
 Thou art ambrosia that ever wells,
 Within myself, my life, my thought a tree,
 That yields all things desired, a firmament,
 Of joy and wonder filling both my eyes.
 Ecstasy like a song doth fill the heart,
 Of Baktas who have transcended desire.
 God let thy beauteous and gracious feet,
 Grant me refreshing rest and lasting bliss,
 And make me free from bodily decease.
 All-wise and All-good God, thine truest light,

That dwelleth with thy own, O, flood of health,
 Thou dost abide in me—I knew not how—,
 Him that is more than kin or friend,
 I saw as grandest sight and seeing lost,
 Myself, lost all, gained all and in the place,
 Of worldly joys, His joy inspiring self.
 'What sight is this': 'What joy is this'?
 Grant me salvation, God; do thou,
 Grant me to see thee face to face,
 Be thou a sky and as a rain
 Of bliss descend upon me, for sure,
 'Tis thine to make me live and thrive,
 O, God on high, O, light on high,
 Thou saving light, Thou flood of health,
 My spirit's joy, O gracious Lord.

ப ல் ல வி.

- (1) ஆனந்தம் ஆனந்தம் ஆனந்தமே—ஞான
 ஆனந்தம் ஆனந்தம் ஆனந்தமே.

அ னு ப ல் ல வி.

உள்ளமதிலே இலகும்
 தெள்ளமுதே ஜீவனதே.

(ஆன)

ச ர ண ங் க ள்.

1. கண்ணே கருத்தே யென்கற்பகமே நல்
 கண்ணிறைந்த விண்ணைந்த வியப்பே.
 பண்ணாய் நிஷ்காமியாப் பக்தன் உள்ளத்தே
 பரவசமிகப் பிரகாசிக்கும் தாளே. (ஆன)
2. என்றைக்கும் அழியாத சித்விசிராந்தி
 இன்பநிலை என திருதயத் தருளி.
 கன்றிமெ நோய் எனை தொடராதருள்புரி
 கர்த்தனின் விசித்ர காருண்ய கழலே. (ஆன)
3. சித்தமு மறியா சூட்சம் வழியாய்
 சித்தமா மெனது ஸ்தலநின் நிலகு.
 சத்திய ஜோதி சர்வஞ்ஞ சாத்மீக
 சர்ஜனார் வாச தகுசக வாரியே. (ஆன)
4. உற்றூரிலும் மேல் உற்றூன் றினயே
 உயர்வென தரிசித் தகம்பர வசமாய்.
 பெற்றேன் அற்றேன் ஜகமதின் பற்றேன்
 பெரியானவன் திருவுளம் தான்தினம். (ஆன)

ப ல் ல வி.

இதுதான் என்னகண் காட்சி—ஆகா
எவ்வள வானந்த மாட்சி.

அ னு ப ல் ல வி.

■ கதிதனை யருள்யாசாமி—தரிசனம்
கருத்தினில் நேமி.

தொகையு.

வானமாய் நின்றின்ப மழையா யிரங்கியெனை வாழ்விப்ப
துன்பாங்காண் பாதெய்வமே. பாஞ்சோதியே
சுகவாரியே ஞானஆனந்தமாம். சீரானும் தெய்வத்
திருவருளே என்கெதியாம். என் ஜோதி.

பாட்டு.

ஈனத் தருமுடலை என்னெதியா னென்பதற
ஆனந்தம் வேண்டி யலைந்தேன் பராபரமே.

(இது)

SECTION 4.—COMMUNION WITH THE DIVINE A COMPARISON OF MY VISIONS WITH THOSE OF THE SADHU

It now remains, to give some indication of the inner life of the Spirit, which I consider to have become my most privileged possession within the last ten years of my life, together with some of the spiritual experiences and realizations which have accompanied it. I regard it as a most fortunate circumstance that my son and Canon Streeter of Oxford have collaborated in publishing an account of the life and experiences of Sadhu Sundar Singh just at this time. I have read the book with great pleasure, because it brings to my mind some of the most vivid and striking of my own experiences and has enabled me to compare the views and visions with which the Sadhu has been favoured with similar experiences of my own. Educated people, unless indeed they have studied the lives of the mystics, are apt to question the mental balance of

any one who not only sees visions but takes them seriously.' Though it is now some years since I have been favoured with the spiritual experiences referred to, I have refrained from giving public expression to them, for the same reasons which have induced the Sadhu to be reticent about them and made Saint Paul describe his own visions in the third person, as if they were the experiences of some one else besides himself. On a close study of the recent book on the Sadhu, I find such a number of differences in form and content between his visions and my own that I thought that it might be of advantage to emphasise the points on which we are in agreement, while indicating the features in which there might be a difference.

MY VISIONS A GREAT SOURCE OF REFRESHMENT

The authors of the book just mentioned have preferred to describe the Sadhu's experiences as ecstasies in which the mind is lifted up above the circumstances of the surrounding world and moves in entire forgetfulness of the phenomena of the senses. I would like to adhere to the language employed by St. John in the *Book of Revelation*, and to describe them as so many manifestations of the Spirit, and the sum-total of these experiences as living in the Spirit; but I am one with him in the importance that I attach to these moments of light and liberty. 'They are a great source of illumination, solace and physical refreshment, in fact a pearl of great price which I would not give up for the whole world.' Not only is the heart

refreshed and strengthened and filled with the peace of God that passeth all understanding, but even the body seems to become refreshed and the mind appears to grow in clarity and breadth of view. Indeed I would go to the length of saying that they cause a progressive improvement of the whole man, building up the body more than any system of diet or exercise would do, and developing the mind in a way which cannot be accomplished by the most careful intellectual discipline. The spirit in the meanwhile is filled with joy and peace. 'One never gets tired or wants something different : one always feels at home and equal to the largest demands made upon one by the spirit.'

THE SYMBOLIC NATURE OF SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

It is noted as a characteristic of the Sadhu's experience that he largely thinks in pictures; and that he is taught his views of God, the world and immortality, through the medium of symbols. It seems to me that it is scarcely possible for these views to be otherwise than symbolic or pictorial. It is unreasonable to expect that we can see heaven, or hell or the God above, or His attendant spirits with the human eye. Our conceptions of the nature of the future life and of the Godhead must necessarily be of a symbolic character ; the symbols being dependent upon the candidate's own previous mental experiences and endowments natural and acquired. It is not the individual that sees pictures, but the spirit that makes the future and the past and the eternal appear in the shape of

pictures. The seers of the Old Testament, Moses, Isaiah, and Ezekiel must have seen many more of these pictures than have been embodied for us in holy writ; those and those only of the pictures which bear on human problems and serve to explain some of the difficulties in connection with the Godhead and the future life are preserved for us.

THE SADHU'S ADVANCE ON TRADITIONAL TRUTH

It may or may not be that the visions seen by the Sadhu and others like him do not possess the authority of those Apocalyptic visions which are found in Scripture, but they clearly show an advance upon the traditional apprehension of Divine truth, and furnish pictorial explanations of difficulties with which we are faced at the present day. His view, for instance, that God does not punish human beings but that they themselves (that is, the sum-total of their actions) pass judgment upon themselves and are afraid of entering into the region of holiness and light occupied by the Divine, is a much more fruitful explanation of the difficulties raised in connection with a merciful God adjudging so many sinners to judgment than the ordinary theological theories about it. His further view that no soul, whether in heaven or in hell or in the intermediate condition, is left alone but that waves of light and love are sent to them all for the purpose of bringing them eventually into His presence, is also a wonderful figure which manifest the central purpose of His infinite love.

It is not possible for human beings to see these visions with bodily eyes, but they are seen with those eyes of the spirit which we shall use after taking leave of the body at the time of death. In fact behind and below the sheath of the body there appears to be a still more wonderful spiritual sheath, which reproduces the peculiarities of the human form divine, but is full of light and altogether free from those frailties and limitations to which the human sheath which we shall shed as a snake sheds its coat, is subject.

MY VISION OF THE TRINITY

It has not been my privilege to see the Divine Being accompanied with hosts of angels and saints, who are in perpetual communion one with another on the most beatific of subjects ; but Christ to me is always the central figure in these visions ineffable and indescribable. The region round His throne is also full of light and nothing on earth is so beautiful, not even diamonds or precious stones. His figure is ruddy like gold or glowing light and there is a crown on His head, but He is accompanied by other figures which are in intimate touch with Him and which appear to represent respectively the other two persons of the Holy Trinity. Waves of light and love proceed from His body 'in whom dwelleth the fullness of Godhead ;' proceeding thence these waves travel to the souls in need, filling them also with life similar to His. These waves appear to represent the working of the Holy Spirit in human hearts, raising them to ecstasy and building up and strengthening them.

With this vision, which the Sadhu and I see, should be compared the visions of St. John recorded in the *Book of Revelation*, 'And I looked, and, behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown and in his hand a sharp sickle' (Rev. xiv. 14). I may add that I do not see the sickle. Another vision which I see is that of a star, which is a point of light with rays issuing from it in all directions. It is interesting to note that when I gaze at the stars on the sky, they too appear not as mere points, but as points with rays of light emerging from them.

Ecstasy is not a mere trance of hallucination, but is a dive to the bottom of spiritual things, and instead of exhausting or tiring the aspirant, as in the case of psychic media, refreshes and strengthens him. It is not a dream-state, but one in which the mind can think steadily and continuously on the same subject without being disturbed by distractions, or tired by persistent concentration on the same topic. The inspiration under which the books of Scripture were written was probably an instance of this ecstatic condition, which can be described as a hyper-stimulation of the natural faculties of insight and understanding which in men of high ideals, schooled by the discipline of a noble life, must inevitably follow from personal communion with a personal God.

THE-WRITING OF THE NAME OF THE LAMB

The statement in the *Book of Revelation* that the name of the Lamb was found written on the foreheads

of the saints in heaven (Rev. xxii. 4) receives a new illumination from the vision which the Sadhu had of those heavenly beings. He appears to think that there was no physical inscription on the foreheads, but that they all bore the stamp and image of Christ and reflected the glorious dazzling light which issues from Him. But it seems to me that the statement that 'Christ the hope of Glory lives in you' and that other verse, 'beholding as in a mirror the Glory of the Lord we shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord,' give us a nearer approximation to the real truth, and enable us to put a new construction upon it, which is even more satisfying than the Sadhu's conception.

Then again his idea that the saints are called gods, because they are capable of an infinite progressive development, until they become perfect like God, and shine with the same light with which He shines, is one which gives a new picture of the love of God, who is so unselfish that He desires the smallest of his saints to become like Him, and is not satisfied until the waves of grace proceeding from Him have transformed the saint into a being of light and power similar to Himself, so that he may have an object whom he can truly and fully love.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VISIONS AS A PART OF SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

It is necessary here to adduce my reasons for regarding the seeing of visions as a vital and important part of Christian experience, though there

are other types of Christian life which are just as valuable.

SUPPORT FROM THE BIBLE

Many of the Prophets and Apostles were 'seers,' i.e. men who saw. They derived their knowledge of God, and understood His purposes for mankind through visions. We have in the Bible accounts of the visions which Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, St. Paul and St. John saw, and are not these among the very greatest of the writers of the Bible, through whom God has uttered His will to mankind? 'I will lift up,' sings the Psalmist, 'mine eyes unto the mountains from whence my help cometh. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.' Our Lord declares, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' In John xvii. our Lord Jesus Christ Himself lifted up His eyes unto heaven and showed the oneness of Himself with the Father, and the oneness of Himself with His disciples so that the three might be made perfect in one. Thus we derive support for our position that this type of experience is vital from the experience of our Lord Himself. This lifting up of the eyes is followed by visions, the 'beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord.' There is a remarkable verse in the Gospel of St. John, a man of clear and penetrating spiritual insight, which shows what is the result of lifting up the eyes. In chapter ii. 41, we read, 'Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father."' This clearly shows that, when Jesus lifted up His eyes, He beheld His Father, with

whom He began to commune. This fact, I may add, verifies my own experience when I see God on lifting up my eyes. It is also significant that Jesus declares that then He does what He *sees* the Father doing.

This glorious experience was not confined to Biblical times. All through the long centuries that have elapsed since the seer at Patmos recorded his visions, Christian mystics have arisen and have been strengthened, inspired or illumined by visions from on high. Spurgeon, the great preacher and saint, prays, 'Lord, paint upon the eyelids of my soul the image of thy Son.'¹ This is a rather significant fact as Spurgeon was not, to my knowledge, a mystic. Though apparently not given to the seeing of visions, he had, in a moment of spiritual exaltation, realized the possibility of Christ being painted upon the eyelids of the soul—a possibility which is a fact with mystics. Of this I may say, as the Sadhu said, when a similar harmony of conclusions arrived at by visions and by ratiocinative thinking was pointed out to him, 'I am not at all surprised. Truth is one; but different men may attain to it by different paths.'²

SUPPORT FROM HINDU LITERATURE

Further, there have not been wanting mystics in India, who coming near the Divine in solemn moments, have had their deep spiritual experience confirmed by visions. Thayumanavar sings, 'Thou perfect bliss pervading entirely all the space that

¹ *Morning by Morning*, December, 17.

² *The Sadhu*, p. 116.

meets our gaze.'¹ It is interesting to compare this with the words of the *Te Deum* in the *Book of Common Prayer*: 'Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of Thy Glory.' Another significant couplet from Thayumanavar runs thus :—

My life, my thought, a tree
That yields all things desired,
A firmament of joy and wonder, filling both my
eyes. ■

According to a Saivite poem, Siva with his matted hair will appear to his saintly ones.³

SUPPORT FROM SCIENCE

Here I would like to give expression to my conviction that there is ample scientific support for the position that deep concentration and communion with the Divine is a vital part, though not the only part, of Christian experience.

¹ பார்க்குமிட மெங்குமொரு நீக்கமற நிறைகின்ற
பரிபூரணனந்தமே.

² கண்ணே கருத்தே கற்பகமே என்
கண்ணிறைந்த விண்ணே
ஆனந்த வியப்பே பராபரமே.

³ வடியேறு திரிசூலந் தோன்றுந் தோன்றும்
வளர்ச்சடைமே விளமதியந் தோன்றுந் தோன்றும்
கடியேறு கமழ்கொன்றைக் கண்ணி தோன்றும்
காதில்வெண் குழைதோடு கலந்து தோன்றும்
இடியேறு களிற்றூரிவைப் போர்வை தோன்று
மெழிறிகழுந் திருமுடியு மிலங்கித் தோன்றும்
பொடியேறு திருமேனி பொலிந்து தோன்றும்
பொழிறிகழும் பூவணத்தெம் புனிதஞர்க்கே.

(1) A line of thought, along which science supports my position, is that all medical authorities are agreed in regarding worry, care and anxiety as factors that sap energy, and destroy life. Now in our still calm contemplation, we are wonderfully delivered from these life-destroying agencies. Peace, Joy and Quiet reign in our souls and these build up the body and the soul, just as their opposites destroy them.

(2) A second line along which scientific support for the position I have taken up is forthcoming is the intimate connexion between light and life. In contemplation, I behold light, not in a figurative but in a real sense. God is light and it is natural and right that He should appear to His devotees in that form. From the first moment of this kind of experience we see light, but just as the light that is hidden in a match sometimes dies out but sometimes spreads over vast areas, so with some men this experience of light is a rather simple fact, whereas with others it is a glorious experience, expanding wonderfully and unfolding endless varieties, types and colours. The beholding of light with the physical eye makes, we know, for health and life. In the same way, the gazing on real light with the inner, spiritual eye makes for abundance, vigour, fulness. The deeper, the more prolonged the communion with the Divine the higher, the stronger and the more vigorous our life becomes.

(3) Bergson refers to the psychologists who maintain that, 'if we could penetrate into the inside of a brain at work and behold the dance of the atoms which make up the cortex, . . . we should know

every detail of what is going on in the corresponding consciousness.¹

In my experience, I seem to penetrate into the inside of my brain and see the movement of the atoms. It is this constant play to and fro of the atoms that gives power to the brain. And my method of prayer and concentration seems to accelerate, or at least to help along, this process. To put the matter at its lowest value then, our prayer and concentration is like mental or spiritual gymnastics. Just as the body gets strengthened by the physical exercise which moves the limbs, so the spirit is strengthened and invigorated by the play of the atoms that compose the brain by close and sustained concentration.

As a result of studying the Hindu literature on the subject and of talking over the matter with men who have practised Yoga, I have come to the conclusion that Hindu Yogis and Gnanis have understood clearly the functions of the sensory and motor centres in the body, have accurately located them, and have acquired the power to control them.

(4) In our spiritual experience, we lift up our eyes towards the heavens and fix them on the clouds, on the vast expanse of the sky. On the basis of this experience, I find it very easy to understand the Biblical statement that Christ will come in the clouds of heaven. Now, it is accepted in scientific circles that the further we go away from the earth's surface, the more ethereal it becomes. These remote regions, which seem to the eye to lie near the skies, seem to be pervaded by

¹ *Matter and Memory*, p. 11.

something less material than spiritual. It is very difficult to designate this mysterious something, though I venture to think that it is the Spirit. This constant contact with the regions beyond, brings into our system abundant vitality. From on high flows into our mind and soul, through the channel of prayer and contemplation, energy which is nothing less than divine.

THE EFFECT OF THE VISIONS

From the words which I have written at the beginning of this section, it will be clear that I attach much weight to visions, and regard the last period of my life as far more important than the two earlier stages when I did not see visions. The reasons for this view are strong and clear in my own mind. My experience indicates in an unmistakable way the fact that these visions have wrought in my life a change at once profound and startling. They have filled my mind with the peace which passeth all understanding. Great contentment and resignation dwell in my innermost soul. Even natural passions like pride, anger, worldliness have almost disappeared, the significant fact being that they have not been suppressed by degrees, by slow, deliberate efforts of the will; but have been triumphantly, gloriously vanquished by the power of the Holy Spirit. They have disappeared under an influence, not mine. And at this age, I feel refreshed physically, mentally and spiritually. And I am also sensibly and consciously progressing from day to day, becoming happier and more peaceful.

VISIONS AND OTHER TYPES OF CHRISTIAN
EXPERIENCE

The importance that I attach to my visions does not, however, lead to the inference that all Christians should see visions, and that those who do not see visions have not attained the summit of Christian experience: The gifts of the Spirit are diverse and men are summoned by God to minister in His Kingdom in diverse ways. Even men, who have what might appear to our understanding as elementary Christian gifts, are probably quite important to the Kingdom. A knowledge of the alphabet is never to be despised, for it is the first step on the road that leads gradually, stage by stage, to the highest learning.

IS A GURU NEEDED

I venture to think that a great many Christians do not see God, not because they cannot, but because they will not. It is the heritage of all Christians. The trouble is with themselves. They do not claim it. Just as some men can work out a knotty mathematical problem by themselves, and others need a tutor to help them, so some men attain to this deep experience by a natural capacity, stimulated by meditation, prayer and asceticism, or by persistent almost dogged resolution to make themselves worthy of this great gift of the Spirit, whereas others reach this experience with the help of a human Guru. To both classes alike, Christ is the supreme Guru, in the first instance. The mystic rite of initiation is administered by Him, not in an explicit human ceremony; but often in an

awakening of the Spirit whose movements are as mysterious as those of the wind.

VISIONS ARE MANIFESTATIONS OF REALITY

It is my firm conviction that these visions are actual, concrete manifestations of Reality and not mere pictures wrought by our imagination. In contemplation, the veil that lies over us under normal circumstances is, so to speak, torn asunder and we obtain glimpses, brief but of unforgettable vividness and beauty, of God.

In the words of Abbe P. Le Jeune, the author of a most valuable book, 'it is God Himself in us, and no more His image, which, in this contemplation, we perceive and touch.'¹ The fact that, though every morning in my bed-room I gaze steadily for a few moments at pictures of the Christ hanging on the Cross and of Christ emerging from His tomb on the morning of the Resurrection, I never see these figures in my visions confirms in me the conclusion that these are no projections of my fancy, working with familiar material; but are God-given glimpses of the other world of wondrous beauty and glory. But it may be said, 'If the visions of mystics are glimpses of things as they are, how does it happen that they do not always tally, that they have characteristics which do not always correspond?' Suppose there is a household and different photographs are taken of it at different times—when the members of that household are engaged in prayer, when they are at their meals, when they are following, sometimes in the house and sometimes outside,

¹ *An Introduction to the Mystical Life*, p. 6.

each his own vocation—these photographs will vary considerably. The visions are mystical pictures of Reality, and yet they are different, because Reality and Heavenly Things have many phases, and some mystics gaze at one phase and others at another, according to their desire.

VISIONS AND THE USE OF REASON

In thus enjoying visions and allowing myself to be largely influenced in the understanding, in the judgment, and in action by them, I am not, however, despising reason. Reason is a God-given gift and should be fully exercised. When difficult problems arise, when different courses of action present themselves before me, I endeavour to use my reason and to come to a conclusion. Faithfully and earnestly do I seek to make clear to myself the issues to be decided and the considerations that can be urged on either side. But, when I reach the point where I find myself helpless, then I resort to the prayer of contemplation. In contemplation, I find that reason ceases to function, but that my problems solve themselves naturally; the decision, I was unable to reach in the normal human way by processes of thought, is quite clear to me.

WHEN I SEE VISIONS

I see these visions when I sit for contemplation, drawing aloof from the din and bustle of the world and am alone with God. They occur after a few minutes of prayer and thought. I can always get into the state in which I can see visions. The prayer of contemplation I practise twice a day.

once in the morning and once in the evening and, whenever I practise this prayer, I see visions. Thus it is rather a unique characteristic of my spiritual experience that I see visions, not at strange and unexpected moments, but at times of which I am perfectly aware and in hours during which I am prepared for it. Another interesting feature of my visions is that, if I gaze steadily at a large sheet of water, the visions which appear above it are luminous, and bright with a wonderful lucidity. Fixing my eyes steadily on the blue of the sky results in visions radiant with blue. The visions which hover over stretches of green are shot with green. Other visions are painted jasper, jardine or gold, according to the colour of the environment.

These and other visions might in some cases prove to be purely physical or psychical phenomena, but when they have been preceded by a purging of the soul and occur in a life that strives for and attains, in a measure, moral and spiritual purity, they cease to be purely psychical phenomena and become filled with spiritual power. None should aspire after visions as such. Every one should live a life of prayer, practising to the utmost cleanliness of thought and action. Then, if he sees visions as a part of his normal Christian experience, they will prove to be blessings and not mere mental projections, devoid of spiritual meaning.

INTUITIVE UNDERSTANDING OF SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

Besides seeing visions, I seem to possess also the capacity to understand intuitively certain great

spiritual truths. For instance, the conviction has been borne in upon me from above that the things referred to in the Bible as 'the tree of life,' 'the water of life,' 'the hidden manna,' and 'the breath of life' are all identical, and that they are all different ways of describing the Holy Ghost. Every student of Hindu thought knows that an important part of Yoga is Pranayama, the control of the breath. The breath that is thus controlled, and which adds vigour and strength to our prayer life, is the Holy Ghost.

MARRIAGE AND THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

Another matter, which I have come to understand intuitively, is the exact significance of the marriage of the Lamb, described in the *Book of Revelation*. I regard it as a symbolic way of speaking of the contemplative prayer of the mystics, in which they are one with the Divine. The fundamental idea conveyed by marriage is the union of two people. In the prayer of contemplation, the union that takes place is that of the human and the Divine Spirit, the Holy Ghost. The supper of the Lamb indicates the great joy that accompanies the union. In a marriage feast, the utmost hilarity prevails and the five senses get their fill of satisfaction. So in contemplation there is almost measureless bliss. It is interesting to compare with this the discipline of a Jivan Mukta, as it was described to me by a profound Saiva Siddhanta scholar. 'A Jivan Mukta,' is one who is intoxicated with God, like a bee which lies insensate, because of the abundant honey

it has sucked.' Just like the bee, the devout soul sucks honey from different Scriptures, from the different postures recommended for contemplation, from different Bhaktis. At first it grasps with the intellect and is in the sober realms. But, as it proceeds, it becomes less and less ratiocinative, being overwhelmed by feeling and in the last stage it is absolutely overpowered by its abundantly blissful experience. Likewise in the meditation practised by Vedantins, the devotee enjoys the Divine Being as an Effulgent Light. Then his thoughts and feelings die, and his spiritual faculties enter, or have already entered, into the blissful enjoyment of union with the Highest Spirit.

A STILL, SMALL VOICE

I hear, besides, a still small voice always; this voice becomes stronger if my prayer that day has been more intense than usual. This voice does not say anything in particular, but is rather the hearing of the stillness—the still small voice of the spirit. Such a voice seems to have been heard by many saints. We read in 1 Kings xix. 12 that Elijah heard a still small voice. This phrase has been more accurately translated as 'a voice of fine stillness;' my own experience makes clear this translation to me. A Hindu Yogi told me that such an inner voice would be heard when meditation is practised. The following lines which occur in the *Tirumantram* show that Tirumular was also familiar with this voice.

The Holy Spirit will be glad,
If I embrace her where nor day,
Nor night is known nor noise heard.¹

இரவும் பகலும் இலாத விடத்து
 குரவும் செய்கின்ற குழலியை உன்னி
 அரவும் செய்யாமல் அவளுடன் சேர
 பரிவொன்றிலாளும் பராபரி தானே.

REASONS FOR WRITING ABOUT THESE GIFTS

I have written in this strain of the dearest and most valued of spiritual gifts not in a boastful spirit, but because I feel convinced that a knowledge of these facts will serve to refute some of the positions of the critics of the Bible and of Christianity, who seem to move altogether on a lower mental plane, judging things by what they understand with their reason, and who are unaware of the achievements which are possible for men filled with the Holy Spirit. Such critics say that miracles and other supernatural phenomena are against natural law, but they are in harmony with spiritual law which is a higher law. The fact that men to-day possess such gifts must necessarily make critics of the supernatural in Christianity proceed with great caution in their reasoning. I also think of the wonderful possibilities before the Indian Church, if these gifts were obtained on a large scale. Many would be the independent workers that would arise, to whom opportunities for work would be open; not because of their connexion with any organization or mission; but because of their spiritual power, evident to all. And how the Church would expand with a large number of such men to bear witness to the power of Christ in living deed and powerful utterance! Such men, filled with spiritual power, would not keep these things to themselves. For it is a law of the spiritual life that it must be passed

on. 'Divine Fecundity,' say the great mystics of the West, 'the bringing forth of new life, the spreading of more light—is the true object of the soul's union with God. Those in whom this union is perfected are called to a spiritual parenthood. Like the salt, the light, the leaven of the Gospel, they must not keep themselves to themselves.' ¹ As the Maharishi heard on the Himalayas, so they will hear the message: 'The truth thou hast gained the devotion and trustfulness that thou hast learned here—go! make them known to the world.' May God grant that there may be many such men, possessing spiritual gifts, eager to impart them to others and in that way spreading far and wide the good news of the Kingdom of God.

¹ Evelyn Underhill.

CONCLUSION

LET not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord. Jer. ix 23-4.

Recently I completed the seventy-sixth year of my age. While I am deeply grateful to God for having spared me for the threescore years and ten allotted by the Psalmist and the extra years that have been given to me by reason of strength, I am still more thankful that I have been spared the labour and sorrow that accompany declining age, but have instead been blessed with new visions and fresh delights that I had not dreamt of. I seem to myself to stand on a sort of hill top, from which I can review the past and the world around me as a benevolent but disinterested spectator and catch glimpses of the worlds beyond. The retrospect is full of interest, if not also of comfort and pleasure. The prospect is even more pleasing.

During my first twenty-four years, I lived and grew up as a Hindu, first in the narrow and cramping atmosphere of Kulasekarapatam, my native town; later on in the wider and more attractive environment of Palamcottah and Veeragavapuram and finally amidst the stimulating and quickening influences of the city of Madras.

Intellectually this period was one of growth and development, of information, insight and discipline. I learned many things from books and teachers, but still more from the rough and tumble of life through which I had carefully and laboriously to pick my way. Spiritually the period was one of searching, of groping and of yearning. With patience and devotion I passed through every religious experience and excitement available within the Hindu fold, studied the scriptures and sang the hymns of the Hindus, with devotion and ecstasy. But my spiritual thirst was not then satisfied. I still experienced a feeling of dissatisfaction and discomfort, of emptiness and hunger.

In every life which is meant to be a life of achievement, there must be a period of emancipation and liberty. During the years in which I lived and studied in Madras, and discussed with my friends and meditated seriously on the important issues of this life and the next, my eyes were gradually opened, the fear of demons and evil spirits in which I had been brought up disappeared, the superstitions and prejudices, the age long restrictions devised by custom and the still more exacting limitations imposed by rules of caste fell away and ceased to exert their influence. If intellectually the period of my conversion was one of emancipation, morally and spiritually, it coincided with a rebirth resulting in a strange feeling of freshness and joy, and peace and confidence for the future. Instead of depending on myself and the forces around me, which had as much power for evil as for good, I learnt to depend upon a pure and holy God

and to walk with confidence by reason of that dependence. The future had no terrors and the uncertainty of life had no anxiety for me at that stage. I felt that the Lord who had begun a good work in me will continue it unto the end.

Then came thirty years of strenuous life which I ventured to describe as the period of wandering in the wilderness, after obtaining liberty from the bondage of Egypt. Though obtaining daily sustenance from the manna of heaven and often favoured with delectable Elims and sublime Sinais of spiritual experience, it was still a period of doubt and anxiety, of weariness and wandering, of worldly burdens and incessant exertions. The cares of family life, the numerous obligations and anxieties arising from property and the continuous work and worry connected with my profession, left but scanty leisure for spiritual progress or study. No doubt Providence has arranged that in the best years of one's life we should procure for ourselves and for those depending on us the sustenance and the comforts that one will need in old age, and that others may require during years of youth, or sickness, or preparation for life. The *Grahashta*¹ stage of life is at least as valuable as the earlier or *Brahmacharya*² stage; but what most people fail to realize is that by themselves these two stages lead only half way through existence and that they must still go through the forest or *Vanaprastha*³ stage of

¹ *Grahashta*—married man.

² *Brahmacharya*—unmarried student.

³ *Vanaprastha*—married man living in a forest with his family and devoting himself to prayer and meditation. This is an accepted Hindu classification of the different stages of life.

meditation and devotion and spiritual insight if they are to make the most of life. I consider it a special blessing and ground of thankfulness that I was allowed to enjoy new visions and new experiences of a kind that would have been impossible in the earlier periods. The deeper study of the Hindu and the Christian Scriptures, and the influences that have passed during this stage into my life were of a kind to stimulate and quicken it. The new lessons that I have learnt from the service that I have been permitted to do, and the fresh and ever-joyous experience of communion with the divine have so invigorated and blessed my life, that I look back with gratitude to the past and with confidence to the future, and to the still more splendid vistas for which I have been prepared during the past years of searching and wandering and effort.

In conclusion, I am constrained to utter from the depths of my heart the words: Praise God, O my Soul, and all that is within me praise Him. And, O my Soul, Praise God for all his loving kindness and goodness. Many and varied are the blessings for which I have to lift up my heart in praise and thanksgiving to God. For the many opportunities I have been given to preach the Gospel and to bear testimony to Hindus and Christians alike by tongue and pen to the power of Christ, for the entire and marvellous freedom from the difficulties and anxieties, whether caused by financial embarrassment, sickness or worldly trouble, which many of my own friends who became converts to Christianity had in the last days of their life, for the friendly

and cordial relationships with Hindus and Christians alike, for the friendships I have had with learned, rich and influential men before whom I have been able not infrequently to place the claims of the Gospel, for the privilege I have had of entertaining in my house again and again several children of God—for all these and numerous other blessings, too many to be recounted here, I offer with a humble heart and grateful spirit my utmost thanks to God. May He enable the reader to proceed further beyond whatever may be his present stage of accomplishment, avoiding the snares and pitfalls into which I fell but, be guided, inspired and blessed by the same loving God whose abundant mercies have rested upon me, day by day, yea, hour by hour.

A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF SOME LEADING CONVERTS TO CHRISTIANITY¹

*'These that have turned the world upside down have come
hither also'* (ACTS xvii, 6.)

DEWAN BAHADUR A. S. APPASAMI PILLAI showed me his autobiography in manuscript, and asked me to write short sketches of the lives of the men who influenced his career before and after his conversion to Christianity. I have known Mr. Appasami Pillai all my life, and intimately so for over quarter of a century, and I have great pleasure in complying with his request, in the hope that these sketches however imperfect may be instrumental in influencing the lives of some of the readers.

About the middle of last century, the impact of Western ideas and Christian ideals with the Eastern culture and philosophy produced unrest in the minds of thoughtful and religious persons, and the result of this unrest manifested itself in various forms. In Bengal men, like Ram Mohan Roy and Keshub Chunder Sen, were shocked at the idolatrous worship they found round them and felt the want of a pure and uplifting religion. They founded a new cult or religion, called the Brahmo Samaj, based mainly on the teachings of Christ. The doctrines of the Brahmo Samaj are almost the same

¹ This chapter has been contributed by the Hon'ble Mr. Justice M. D. Devadoss Pillai.

as those of the Unitarians. They rejected as false the pantheism of the Hindus and acknowledged only one God, the Father of all. The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man were their watchwords. They set their face against the pernicious caste system, which is the curse of this land and which is responsible for the present state of India.

In Madras men like the late Sadagopa Charlu tried to establish what was known as the Veda Samaj. The main principles of that cult were that there was only one God, that idolatry was not sanctioned by the *Vedas* and that the caste system was opposed to the teachings of the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. They tried to explain as allegorical the *Sloka*, which was held to sanction idol worship and to perpetuate the caste system.

Their attempt to explain away the *Sloka*¹ so dear to the heart of the supporters of idol worship and the caste system, provoked a storm and all the Pundits² opposed the teachings of the Veda Samaj.

The same unrest was felt in the Tinnevely district. The efforts of the Protestant missionaries was a direct challenge to the thoughtful and to the religious section of the Hindu community. The C.M.S. was under the leadership of men like Rhenius, Schaffter, Thomas and Ragland, and the S.P.G. under men like Dr. Caldwell, Huckstable and Brotherton. These were not only men of great learning and deep piety but also of overflowing love to the people of the land. Their one object was

¹ *Sloka* means a verse. This and the other footnotes to this paper by the Hon'ble Justice Mr. M. D. Devadoss are added by me by way of elucidation. A.S.A.

² Pundits, or learned men.

the establishment of Christ's kingdom in Tinnevely. Their efforts met with various degrees of success. There were conversions from the different classes of Hindu society, Brahmin, Vellalah, Marava, Reddi, Naick and Nadar. Several Roman Catholic families also became Protestants.

The same influences that gave to Bengal Ram Mohan Roy, Keshub Chunder Sen, Kali Charan Banerji and Ramachandra Bose, and to Madras, Sadagopa Charlu and the Veda Samajists, produced in the Tinnevely district the subjects of the following sketches. Their general characteristics were these :—

(1) They were all bigoted Hindus. (2) They were endowed by nature with powerful and vigorous intellects. (3) They were well versed in the literature and philosophy of the Hindus. (4) Their minds were pure and they sought after the truth. (5) Their reason refused to accept as true popular Hinduism. (6) Philosophic Hinduism did not satisfy their ardent and earnest souls. (7) Their minds would not be satisfied till their belief could accord with reason. (8) Their courage was equal to their conviction and love of truth. (9) The motive spring of their action was pure and free from the taint of worldly prospects or ambition. (10) Their change of faith was after a full examination of the cardinal principles of Christianity and Hinduism.

The sixth decade of the last century marks an important epoch in the history of Christianity in Tinnevely. A number of young men of good family connexions became students in Mr. Cruickshanks' school in Palamcottah. Mr. Cruickshanks,

who was blind from his twelfth year, was a man of considerable learning and deep piety. His gentle and loving nature endeared him to his students and his name is cherished and revered to this day by his old pupils, Hindu and Christian alike. One of the finest products of his school, a high class Hindu,¹ nephew of a Tahsildar, became a convert and, after being a teacher in the school for some years, went to Madras where he became the leading Indian missionary of the day. His children of the second and third generation are the pillars of the C.M.S. in Madras. It is said that he declined a suffragan bishopric in order that he might devote himself to his work in Madras.

I will now deal with the lives of a group of seven young men, who were intimately connected with one another, and who in the sixth decade of the last century, embraced the Christian faith within a few years of one another. As my main object is to give some idea of the problems they had to solve and the difficulties and trials they had to undergo, I think it best to omit their names and indicate their identity by their peculiar traits and achievements.² These young men may be grouped thus: as two brothers, two other brothers and their brother-in-law, and two intimate friends. The two sets of brothers were the pupils of Tirupalkadalnatha Kavirayar,³

¹ The Rev. W. T. Sattianadhan, B.D.

■ I have taken the liberty of mentioning the names in footnotes for the benefit of my readers, who can then understand the nature and extent of the influence of these men on me. For this purpose, my book *My Conversion*, (pp. 3-4) and the numerous references in this book itself to these men should be consulted. A.S.A.

³ Kavirayar or poet-teacher.

a Pundit of considerable repute at the time. Knowledge in those days could not be bought, but had to be acquired by constant application and hard study. The four men were the Chelas¹ of the Kavirayar and had to do his household work for a considerable time. They washed his clothes, helped him to cook his food as he was a widower and did other indoor and out-door work before he condescended to teach them Tamil grammar. One of the young men knew more of Tamil literature than the Kavirayar, but in order to learn grammar he had to be his Chela. The four young men became Munshis² shortly after to European missionaries and mission institutions. The oldest of the seven men³ a man of great culture, liberal views and hospitable disposition boldly stood out for Christ forsaking his dear wife and child. After some time his wife joined him. Then, finding that the work of a Munshi did not give him scope for his talents, he became a merchant and a public spirited citizen. He was Municipal Councillor in Palamcottah for years and for some time was the most outstanding figure in the Christian community of his day. He was a man of large heart and amiable disposition. He was an accomplished musician and had a great taste for art. He was greatly respected by Europeans and Indians alike and his works on Tamil grammar and physiology are well-known.

His younger brother,⁴ who was Munshi to the saintly Ragland, was greatly struck by the Christ-

¹ Chelas or pupils.

² Munshi is a teacher of languages.

³ Mr. Jesudasen Kavirayar.

⁴ Mr. T. A. Jothinayagam Pillai, who later on was my friend and fellow-preacher for twelve years.

like conduct of his pupil and, after considerable searching of heart, was convinced of the truth of Christianity, and became a convert forsaking his dear wife and child. The successful raid which he and his friends made upon his wife's relations, by which he carried off his young child, could well form the subject of a romance. His wife, a woman of sweet temper, joined him soon after and his aged mother some years later on. His nature was gentle and he never lost faith in his Saviour, even amidst the worst trials and family afflictions. After being a Munshi, coffee planter, and merchant he spent the evening of his life as a literary missionary and the Church in Tinnevely owes much to his work. It might be said of him that, 'He was a convert in whom there was no guile !'

The brother-in-law¹ of these two brothers, who was a pupil in Mr. Cruickshanks' school, belonged to the priestly class among the Sivites. He was a man of great industry and clear intellect. He felt convinced of the truth of Christianity, he gave up his high social position and caste privileges in order to become a humble follower of Christ. His learning and industry enabled him to rise rapidly in Government service, and in his department he reached the highest post then open to a native of India. He has left a name for honesty, industry and purity of public life. Men capable of judging of his merits have said, 'He has won the general esteem of the people of the division in which he lived by his uprightness of conduct and powers of

¹ Mr. W. E. Ganapathy Pillai.

conciliation. He is painstaking, thorough, and may be trusted to do his work with judgment and ability.' His only son has retired as a Deputy Collector in the Government service and his son-in-law is Dewan Bahadur Appasamy Pillai. Many are the persons who even now acknowledge their indebtedness to him for their position, property and education.

Of the first set of two brothers the younger,¹ in his seventeenth year, became a Munshi to the Rev. P. P. Schaffter at Nallur. The late Rev. H. Schaffter, Principal of the C.M.S. College, Tinnevely, who was a boy at that time, playfully attempted many a time to rub off the *Namam*² from the Munshi's forehead. Mr. Sargent engaged his services as a Munshi and he was also the Munshi in Mr. Cruickshanks' school. His elder brother was employed as Pundit in the S.P.G. Seminary at Sawyerpuram.

Two young men were students in Mr. Cruickshanks' school. One, who belonged to the Raju caste³ was the son-in-law of the Public Prosecutor of the time and the other belonged to a good family in the town of Tinnevely.⁴ They became intimate friends of the Munshi. They were nearly of the same age, the Munshi being the oldest of the three. The Munshi was a man of powerful intellect and wonderful memory. He knew by heart the whole of the *Nannul*, *Kural*, and all the didactic poems and

¹ Mr. E. Muthiah Pillai.

² *Namam*, the Vaishnavite caste-mark on the forehead.

³ Dr. W. E. Dhanikoti Raju.

⁴ Manakavala Perumal Pillai. He took the Christian name of Edward Pillai.

nearly the whole of *Kumba Ramayanam*. He had studied all the great epics and philosophic works in the Tamil language. The Raju was endowed with an acute intellect and an analytical mind. The third young man was a born mathematician. These three were earnest, God-fearing and pure-minded young men. They had lost faith in Hinduism as a result of the close study of the Puranas, they began to study the Christian Scriptures; and met morning and evening and discussed the merits of Hinduism and Christianity.

Their spare hours were devoted to the study of religious books. The Munshi who had lost faith in Hinduism, popular and philosophic, was seeking for something pure and holy. He was attracted by the simple life and beautiful character of Christ, which were in distinct contrast to those of the various Avathars¹ and emanations, who were mostly selfish and cruel and exhibited in a marked degree human failings and weaknesses as will be seen from the Puranas. Christ was on a plane, higher, purer and nobler than that of any teacher, Saint, Rishi,² or Avathar that Hinduism could show. The three friends began to seek for the evidences of Christianity. Paley's *Evidences* was carefully studied. They discussed the problems of life, death and eternal punishment. What appealed to the Munshi most was the doctrine of reconciliation, of mercy and justice as expounded by the Christian theologians.³ The three applied to the missionaries

¹ Avathars or Incarnations.

² Rishi or Seer.

³ See Appendix II.

to resolve their doubts. Mr. Cruickshanks helped them, as much as he could, and recommended to them the study of various books which they borrowed from the missionaries. They carefully examined the pros and cons of every doctrine, and applied the critical faculty, and the mental training acquired by a study of Hindu Philosophy, to the test of the Christian doctrines of the Atonement, Predestination and so on. They accepted as true only what their reason permitted them to believe. After a preparation of some years, they were convinced that Christ was the only Saviour of men, and they made up their minds to come out boldly, forsaking their parents, brothers and sisters. No missionary prompted or held out any inducement to them to change their faith. They counted as loss, social position and all the advantages which their birth and religion gave them, in order to act up to their convictions. Mr. Sargent was greatly surprised when he heard that they had made up their minds to become Christians as he had known them to be staunch Hindus.

They refused to be baptized until the missionaries gave up some of their pet theories and foolish practices with regard to the wearing of the *Kudumi*,¹ and as to how Christians should eat, drink, and dress. The trials they endured, the difficulties they overcame and the odium and social ostracism they suffered, it is unnecessary to mention here. Their mutual friendship ended only with death. They were more like brothers than friends.

¹ *Kudumi*, or tuft of hair.

Their lives were pure and spotless. They were liberal in their views and charitable in their disposition. They were puritanic in most of their conceptions and in their life.

The Munshi learned enough English to sit for the Matriculation Examination in the year 1867, but failed to pass as he forgot to write his number on the answer paper. He became familiar with philosophic writers like John Stewart Mill, Spencer, Huxley and others. In later years he read books on the higher criticism and carefully studied Christlieb and other German writers. His house in Palamcottah was the meeting place on Sunday mornings after divine service of all the converts for the discussion of religious and social questions. He made himself familiar with Cook's *Boston Monday Lectures* which came out in the eighties.

A few years after his conversion he was selected in a competitive examination, open to all the Pundits of the Presidency, for the place of referee to the Tamil Bible Revision Committee. The Revision Bible Committee was composed of the representatives of the various missions working in South India, such as Dr. Caldwell (afterwards Bishop), the Rev. E. Sargent (afterwards Bishop), Brotherton, Dr. Scudder, Dr. Bower and several others. While he worked at the revision of the Tamil Bible he was selected to edit the *Jnana Vinodhini* in preference to the late Mr. Krishnama Chari, a noted educationist and scholar in Madras. He edited it in conjunction with his friend the Raju who was then a struggling medical practitioner. He gave it up when he left Madras for Tinnevely.

He was offered a lucrative appointment by the Inspector-General of Registration, the Hon'ble Mr. Ramayyengar, to whom he taught the *Kamba-Ramayanam* when he was in Pursewakam, Madras. He declined it on account of his mother's failing health who objected to his leaving Palamcottah before her death. The mother, a very intelligent woman, was convinced of the truth of Christianity through the offices of the Raju and had accepted Christianity some years before. He was for a time Tamil Pundit in the short-lived C.M.S. College of which the Rev. Mr. Peake was Principal. He established in partnership with the other friend, the mathematician, a mercantile business. Friends and foes said that they could not be merchants without telling lies. They said they would trade without telling lies. They marked on each article its price and said there was no bargaining allowed. People were astonished at this simple device, and their business prospered and is still being carried on by the second generation. He became a large export merchant and did good business in exporting jaggery to England. He exported senna and started a salt credit-order business which he carried on successfully for years. During this interval he defended the Christian faith whenever it was assailed.

- He published, about 1879, the book *Mariolatry Condemned* in answer to the *Worship of Mary*, by G. P. Soundaranayagam Pillai, High Court Vakil of Vannarpett, Tinnevely Bridge, a Jaffanese who had a good knowledge of Tamil. The Vedanta Vicharanasabah of Madras published a pamphlet asking a number of questions about matter, the

origin of the world, creation and other things and issued it broadcast. He replied to their questions by *Answer to the Vedanta Vichrana Sabayar*, and showed the manuscript to Bishop Sargent on the Jubilee Day and had it published at the expense of the C. M. S. Mission. He wrote in 1894 *Christavar Acharamum Gurumarpothakamum* in connection with the controversy then raging about dropping caste titles, during the publication of banns of marriage. He began to publish in the *Narpothkam*, *Vedanta Saram*, an examination of the teachings of the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*—a work greatly admired by the Saiva Siddhantis. His untimely death in 1895 abruptly terminated the publication. His life was pure, simple and free from self-seeking and guile. His word was as good as a bond. His love of truth was such that there was no going back upon what he said.

His wonderful memory and his readiness in applying the rules of grammar to the solution of difficulties during the conferences of the Bible Revision Committee greatly astonished the members. Bishop Caldwell, a man of great scholarship and European reputation, had the highest admiration for him. A generation later when some people wanted to revise the Tamil version of the Book of Common Prayer in 1890, the Munshi was requested to be a member and Bishop Caldwell, who was unable to attend, wrote to Mr. Wyatt, the Chairman, that his views were those of the Munshi and he would gladly subscribe to whatever the Munshi might say. This testimony opened the eyes of the members of the Committee to the

wisdom and scholarship of the Munshi. He was a man of strong faith. During his last illness his brother told him to pray to God that He might give long life ; to which the reply was, ' I was attacked with a serious illness in 1876 and I prayed thus to the Lord, " Give me life until my boy is of an age to take care of my family " and He has granted me more than I had asked for and I will not ask for life now.' He said to his eldest son two nights before his death, ' Be courageous, be courageous. I would gladly say Hallelujah and pass away, it is only for you that I care.' He gave his boys and girls a sound education, and it was his desire not to leave much wealth for his children, lest they should become indolent, wasteful and careless.

The Raju, whose Hindu wife had become a convert some years after his conversion, joined the Madras Medical College, took the M.B.C.M. degree, set up as a private medical practitioner and soon rose to the highest rank in the profession. He became the intimate friend and confidant of men like the late Sir T. Mahadeva Rao, the Hon'ble Mr. Ramayyanger, Sir T. Muthusamy Ayyar, Mr. Ramachandra Ayyar, High Court Vakil, and afterwards Chief Judge in Travancore, and Judge in the Chief Court, Mysore, Professor Ranganathan Mudaliar and a number of the most leading men in Madras. The late Maharaja of Travancore became his friend, visited him in his house at San Thome and granted him concessions in his State for a match factory. The Raju's intellect could turn everything he read to practical account. He published a very useful book on Hygiene before

he left college. He was made a Fellow of the Madras University about 1896. He turned his attention to the improvement of the industries of the country and his practical wisdom devised various schemes for its industrial and commercial regeneration. The weekly steamer service between Tuticorin and Colombo became a daily one, owing to his competition by running steamers between these ports. His salt factory at Arumuganeri has proved that purer salt could be manufactured than at other factories. It has been the means of lowering the price of salt, and has benefited his numerous friends and others. He made a prolonged tour in Europe in 1887 and 1888, and, after his return, turned his attention to hydropathy and started a hydropathic establishment in Palamcottah. His many-sided activities are too numerous for detailed mention here. He was enthusiastic in all that he did and he lived a pure and blameless life. The industrial concerns have been his legacy to his family, who are among the most respected members of Indian Christian society in Madras.

The third friend, whom I will designate as the mathematician, after a successful career as a teacher of mathematics in the high school under Mr. Spratt, devoted himself to commerce, and was the lifelong partner of the Munshi in the business known as Edward & Co., Palamcottah. He was a loyal friend and a guileless Christian. During good fortune and bad fortune he stuck with commendable loyalty to the friend of his youth and their friendship was beautiful and lovely. After his premature death, the Munshi took his son into partnership, and the

son now carries on the business of the two friends, a business started nearly sixty years ago. His son has since married a daughter of the deceased Munshi.

His family was one of the blessed and happy families in this district. His life of piety and simplicity elicited the admiration of all. He was gentle and had a winning smile for all. He never wavered from the simple faith he had in his Lord and, when he died in 1890, the Rev. J. Barton, who had taken Bishop Sargent's place and who had not known him, heard of the story of his conversion, and offered to pay his respects to the departed by conducting the burial service, which he did with the consent of the family and friends.

The elder brother of the Munshi who was a Pundit at Sawyerpuram was a bigoted Vaishnavite.¹ It was the practice of his father to read every day, before he took his midday meal, a portion of Kamban's *Ramayanam*, which he read to an admiring audience. The Pundit very often was asked to read the stanzas which the father explained. By the time he was sixteen years old, his father died and he then knew the whole of Kamban's *Ramayanam*. He was well acquainted with literature and wanted to study grammar. He borrowed a copy of the *Nannul* with *Virthiyurai*,² and asked his brother, the Munshi, to copy it so that he might study it. The younger brother by copying the *Nannul* on cadjan³ became a proficient in grammar and his elder brother began to read *Nannul*. He became a Munshi at Sawyerpuram. Mr. Huckstable

¹ H. A. Krishna Pillai.

² *Virthiyurai* or elaborate commentary,

³ Cadjan or palm leaves,

asked the Pundit innocently what objection he had to becoming a convert. The moment the question was put, the Pundit indignantly threw up his appointment and left Sawyerpuram. He was then a married man with a wife and three children. When he found that his brother, the Munshi, whom he loved as his own soul, had taken an irrevocable step he was very grieved and went to Madras, where he was employed as a Pundit in the Presidency College. Dr. Percival, who was the Superintendent of the Vernacular studies, asked the Pundit to teach him *Ramayanam* which he taught to him before daybreak every day for some time. He knew all about the Christian religion, but being a bigoted Vaishnavite he did not want to give up his social position and to forsake his family. Being thoroughly convinced of the truth of Christianity and of the hollowness of the Hindu religion, he took the rite of baptism from the hands of Dr. Symmonds of Sullivan's Gardens, Madras. On his return to Palamcottah, the S.P.G. claimed him as its own and he was Tamil Pundit at Sawyerpuram until 1876. The C.M.S. sought for his services and he accepted the place of Tamil Pundit of the College at Palamcottah, and, even after the removal of the College to Tinnevely, he continued to be its head Tamil Pundit until 1887, when he was invited to be the head Tamil Pundit of the Maharaja's College, Trivandram, which post he resigned in 1890 and undertook the management of D. Raju's salt factory at Kulasakarapatam. At the earnest request of the Rev. T. Walker and other friends, he became a literary missionary in 1892 and

continued to be such till his death in February 1900. Though he exceeded the Psalmist's span of life of threescore and ten years, his vigour of intellect was not abated and his latest works bear testimony to the clearness of his mind and reason. He bore to the last his great love of truth and hatred of sham. Nothing aroused his ungovernable temper so much as meanness, trickery or falsehood. His life was puritanic in its simplicity. He loved all those he came in contact with, and was ready to help others, even at considerable inconvenience to himself and his family. His presence always inspired confidence in his friends and awe in those opposed to him in religion. He was as simple as a child in his dealings with others, and young and old loved the commanding and stately presence and handsome face of one of the tallest of men. From the day of his conversion his great passion was to win souls for Christ. His conversation and his conduct soon won the esteem and confidence of many thoughtful young men of good social position. Men like Mr. Appasami Pillai were influenced more by the conduct and behaviour of the Pundit than by any direct preaching. He never asked people to become Christians, but only expounded the truth of Christianity and exposed the shallowness of Hinduism and left it to his hearers to make their choice. His house was always open to catechumens and converts. He loved converts as his spiritual children. His ungovernable temper he tried to curb as much as possible, as he considered it a sin to give way to passion however righteous the indignation might be, and he often shed tears

after the outburst was over. His services and efforts to convert Hindus were nobly acknowledged by the Metropolitan of India, who, during a visit to Tinnevely in 1876, pointed to him in Trinity Church, Palamcottah, and said, ' You have converted many a Hindu and may you live long to convert more men to the Christian religion.' He almost lived in an atmosphere of poetry.

His great poetic gifts were placed at the service of his Master. He published in the sixties the *Ratchanya Navanitham*, a work of great merit embodying the truths of Christianity and exposing the hollowness of Hinduism. More than twenty years after its publication he happened to meet Mr. Vedanayagam Pillai, the District Munsiff of Mayavaram, a great lyric poet, whose songs and lyrics are deservedly popular among Christians and Hindus alike. The latter quoted one of the beautiful stanzas of the *Ratchanya Navanitham* and said, ' Are you not he that composed this beautiful stanza?' He corrected and edited *Vedapocul Ammanai* by Vedamanikka Nadan of Sawyerpuram. This is a metrical version of the Bible. He was attracted very early in his life by the simple allegory of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. He therein found the trials, difficulties, the temptations, the hard struggle, the tedious journey and the final victory of a convert like himself, and he made up his mind to embody the career of a true convert in the beautiful Epic of *Ratchanya Yatrikam*.¹ It is not a Tamil version of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. As

¹ *Ratchanya Yatrikam*, literally, pilgrimage for salvation.

the *Madras Mail* said in 1892, ' *Ratchanya Yatrikam* is to *Pilgrim's Progress* what the plays of Shakespeare are to the *Lives of Plutarch*.' Most of it was composed between the years 1887 and 1890 and it was published in 1892 by the S.P.C.K. Press, Madras. Hindu Pundits of great scholarship acknowledged the work to be on a par with Kamban's *Ramayanam*. It avoids the profanities, exaggerations, and grotesqueness of some portions of Kamban's great work. Its language is fairly simple. The cadence of each verse is like music. The highest truths of Christianity are clothed in chaste and simple Tamil and the music of some of the songs and *Thevarams*¹ is exquisite. It will live as long as the language itself and, taking all things into consideration, such a work has not appeared since the days of Kamban.

The Pundit published in the early eighties *Elakana Sudamani*, a Tamil grammar in simple language. As a literary missionary he corrected all the various publications of the C.L.S. His work, the *Ratchanya Manoharam*, embodies the experiences of a Christian, his love, his longing, his doubts, his hours of seeming despair, the dawn of light, peace of mind and final victory. Some of his unpublished works are in the hands of his Executors and it is hoped they will soon be published by them or by the Y. M. C. A. What appealed most to the Pundit and his brother, the Munshi, in the Christian religion was the doctrine which reconciles justice with mercy. No other religion has brought this

¹ *Thevarams*; literally, garlands for God. Devotional hymns.

out. They were familiar as Hindus with the character and the mission of Avathars. But the doctrine of Atonement is peculiar to Christianity. It is the higher side of the Christian religion that appealed to highly critical and cultured minds like those of the Pundit, his brother and Mr. Appasami Pillai. The Pundit's wife and children joined him some years after his conversion, and he was blessed in his daughters and in his grandchildren who are among the leaders of the community.

The example and the teachings of the galaxy of these seven men bore abundant fruit. One of the earliest¹ was a scion of the well-known Pillayan family of Tinnevely, which was once the renters of this district from the Naicks of Madura. He was a pupil of Cruickshanks' school and was influenced greatly by the example of the three friends, who taught him the principles of the Christian religion. His father and relations, coming to know of his intention to become a Christian, got him married and sent him to the Tiruvaduthurai Mutt, where he was kept in close confinement for six months. One night he escaped and took shelter in a humble Christian's house and managed with very great difficulty to reach Palamcottah. When Mr. Sargent heard the news of his escape he went to see the three friends and exclaimed as soon as he saw them, 'K has escaped! K has escaped!' He belonged to one of the richest and most influential families in the district, and he counted father, mother, social position and caste privileges as nothing for Christ's

¹ Mr. Kanthimathinatha Pillai.

sake. He was a bright example of what one could give up for the sake of conviction and faith. Many years afterwards, he got a portion of his share of his family property and his life was blessed and his home a happy one. He married the eldest daughter of the Pundit, a highly intellectual and charming woman of great beauty. He was blessed in his children to whom he gave a liberal and sound education. They are some of the most esteemed members of the Christian community. He rose to positions of trust and responsibility in the Government service. He was a pillar of the Church and a member of the Church Council, until he left Palamcottah on promotion in the public service.

Another convert was from Kottur near Palamcottah,¹ and to his credit it must be said that he induced two of his brothers, a sister and finally the bigoted Hindu father to become Christians. One of that mighty race is still spared to us in the person of Dewan Bahadur Appasamy Pillai. Though he did not belong to that set of seven but to a later one, yet he exemplifies in his life the good qualities of those whose lives he carefully watched and studied. Mr. Appasamy Pillai belongs to a respectable high class Hindu family and came early under the influence of the Pundit at Sawyerpuram. His aversion to Christianity and Christians wore away in the study of the loving, simple-minded, pure-souled Pundit, who exhibited in his conduct the virtues of a child of Christ. Mr. Appasamy Pillai was not one to take anything on trust. He weighed

¹ Mr. Ramasamy Pillai.

everything calmly in the light of reason. He went to Madras and studied the Brahmo Samaj religion and was convinced of the folly and futility of idolatry. He examined every Christian doctrine in the light of reason, and, after years of patient study, meditation and prayer, he resolved to forsake father, mother, brothers, sisters, and relations for the sake of Christ. He was baptized by Mr. Symmonds who had baptized his Guru, the Pundit. I do not wish to speak here of his early trials, choice of profession, marriage, his success in life and his wisdom in the management of his numerous concerns, as his autobiography is before the reader; but I will confine myself to a notice of what I consider his outstanding characteristics. The one great thing noticeable is his thirst for knowledge. Even in the evening of his life he seeks knowledge and light for their own sake, and is prepared to seek them with equal zeal in the lecture hall of the philosopher as well as in the *kudam*¹ of a cottage, and from the learned and the unlearned alike. It was said of Gladstone that his hatter had had to take the measurements of his head once in ten years as it grew in size. Though Mr. Appasamy Pillai's head does not grow visibly in size, yet his spiritual knowledge and experience have been growing. Mr. Appasamy Pillai has always been aspiring after perfection. He was led to the feet of Christ by the example of the Pundit at Sawyerpuram, whom he found to be scrupulously honest, truthful, loving, humble and full of Christian charity. He is never satisfied with what he has achieved. He weighs

¹ *Kudam* or the front part.

everything with calmness and sobriety and is never fluttered. As a vakil he was known for his deep insight into men and things and his knowledge of law, though not vast, was deep. What he read he digested and made his own. His innate shrewdness always exposed to him the weakness of the opponent. He may be said to be a magnet pointing to the pole of spiritual perfection. Another good trait is his desire to impart to others what he considers good for himself. His religion is not a selfish one seeking only to save his own soul. His ambition is to diffuse the knowledge of Christ. He is anxious that others should have his spiritual experience. He retired from his profession twenty years ago and I consider the last twenty years to be the most fruitful period of his life. He is always tactful and tries to avoid giving offence. He is not dogmatic or narrow-minded. He is ready to see the good in others. He studies Hinduism to see how the cardinal principles of that system can be reconciled with Christian doctrines.

His mind is ever active and it is a religious treat to have a talk with him. If his vigorous intellect had been early trained in Western science and philosophy, he could have helped to solve successfully some of the problems which Western thinkers have been unable to solve. That he is held in the highest esteem by Europeans, Indian Christians and non-Christians alike goes without saying. His spiritual experience has been gradually growing. He sees visions and dreams dreams. From a record of his experiences I am led to think he is a mystic. His prayers for the sick have often

been heard. He believes he has the power of healing and, knowing him as I do, I can say he has no hallucinations. May he be spared for long years to be a beacon light to the Christians of his land. He is happy in his children. He has given his sons the most liberal education obtainable in Madras, in England, and in America. One of his sons, a most distinguished graduate of the Madras and Cambridge Universities, occupies a high Judicial Office in Madras and is destined to rise to a seat in the highest court of the land. Another son is a distinguished graduate of an American University and Oxford, and has begun to do literary work of a high order. One of his daughters is a graduate of the Madras University. In his case the promise 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you' has been amply fulfilled.

It is these men that have raised the Christian community of the district socially, morally and spiritually to the high level in which we now find it. Before their time the Christians were a despised class. They were often branded with the name of rice Christians, that is, men who changed their faith for worldly advancement, or for filthy lucre. The character and example of these men have shown the world what Christianity can do to intellectual men, who started life with a strong bias against Christianity and Christians.

M. D. DEVADOSS.

PALAMCOTTAH,

June 25, 1922.

APPENDIX I

THE SUBSTANCE OF SANKARA'S PHILOSOPHY

1. (1) The Brahman is the only thing that is True; (2) the world is illusory; (3) the soul is Brahman and nothing else. Brahman is Nirguna but all intelligent. The world though illusory, for all practical purposes, is real. 'Tat Tvam asi' 'Thou art that' is his great teaching.¹

2. He who knows Brahman is Brahman, for there is nothing worth gaining, there is nothing worth enjoying, there is nothing worth knowing but Brahman alone. Max Müller further says that 'We can hardly blame Sankara for taking refuge in the theory of a Lower and a Higher Brahman, the former being the Brahman of philosophy, the other that of religion.'²

THE SUBSTANCE OF RAMANUJA'S PHILOSOPHY

Ramanuja holds that (1) the soul is real; (2) the individual souls and the material world are the constituent elements of Brahman; (3) Brahman is full of compassion, love, intelligence and mercy. His teaching is Bhakti and love. According to him individual souls retain their individuality even when they reach the blissful abode of Brahman. He emphasizes a personal god as the creator of this universe. Hence says Max Müller: 'Ramanuja's Brahman is scarcely more than an exalted Iswara.'

THE SUBSTANCE OF SAIVA SIDDANTHA

1. Hara is the First Cause of the universe, in the sense that he makes the universe with material already available. God, Soul and Matter are eternal.

¹ Max Müller remarks that this statement 'Tat Tvam asi' is the boldest and truest synthesis in the whole history of philosophy. He also says that to maintain the eternal identity of the human and the divine is not the same as arrogating divinity for humanity. Max Müller, *Six Systems of Philosophy*, p. 161.

² A Vedantin renounces idol worship and the observance of caste.

2. Soul is not Brahman, nor body, nor any anthakarna (such as thought, imagination, reason, and will) ; but is something different from them, though it acts through them.

3. By Tapas (penance) Hara will appear as Guru to the advanced soul, and will teach him to seek God and His grace, being freed from the thralldom of the five senses. Such a soul enjoys blissful union with Hara.

4. When it loses its life of communion with God it worships God, true devotees and temples as Gods.

5. A Jivan Mukta is freed from all acts, good and bad and all attachment : and reaches Siva or Brahman.¹

THE SUBSTANCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

1. God is the First Cause and Creator of this universe.

2. Godhood consists of Father, Son and the Holy Ghost, answering to the Hindu conception of (1) Sat ; (2) Chit ; and (3) Ananda—(1) Ever-existing ; (2) Wisdom ; (3) Blissful.

3. God breathed His Spirit into man and he became a living soul. God created man in His own image and likeness. Some divines think that man is more an emanation than a creation.

4. God granted free will to man and bade him refrain from certain acts. He transgressed and became a sinner and transmitted that sin to all his descendants. The Word (Christ) which was in the beginning with God and was God, created the universe and became flesh as Jesus. He taught morals, pardoned men's sins and gave them power to live without sin : this he acquired by His crucifixion and resurrection.

5. The whole system of advocating a sinless, pure life is simply to restore man to the original condition in which he was created in the image of God.

6. Realization of the Holy Spirit in life and conduct gives fuller and more abundant life in Christ Jesus, the Saviour.

¹ The crying evil of the Saivites is idol worship and the observance of caste.

7. A self-sacrificing and self-denying life is a life of service to fellow men in all possible ways.

8. Realization of Christ in the inner and outer life is the highest development of Salvation.

NOTE.—God the Father corresponds to the Higher Brahman and His Son Jesus Christ to the Lower Brahman of Sankara's philosophy.

APPENDIX II

THE CHARACTER OF MR. A. S. APPASWAMY PILLAI,

BY

MR. J. GANAPATHY PILLAI, RETIRED DEPUTY
COLLECTOR ¹

THE qualities of Mr. A. S. Appaswamy Pillai's mind and heart are so remarkable, and for an Indian in many respects so exceptional, that it is very desirable they should be set forth point by point for the benefit of his descendants and others who may read this account of his life. The most striking feature of his mind is his ability to form new and sound ideas upon every subject that comes before him. This ability is due to his habit of setting before himself every question, whether an intellectual, moral, religious or business one, as a problem for his solution, considering it from every point of view and never dismissing it from his mind, until he comes to a conclusion satisfactory to himself. This habit is itself due to the fact that, in his youth, he had to depend upon himself for determining his manner of living and for planning his education and his future, his parents and friends not being in a position to render him any help in the matter, except some grudging pecuniary help. The habit, of which the foundation was thus laid, was strengthened and confirmed, when Christianity was presented to him as a better religion than the one in which he was born and he had to decide whether to accept or reject it. He considered this question and discussed it with those whose intellectual, and moral worth commanded

¹ My brother-in-law was writing his Life and it was said that it was for the benefit of his descendants. I did not quite approve of some things said in what was drafted as the preface to the Life. I said, I would draw up a sketch of his character to be appended to his Life, so that its usefulness to his descendants might be enhanced, as I know my brother-in-law for fifty years, even when he was a Hindu,

his respect for some years, before he solved it to his own satisfaction. It was this habit, doubtless based upon a natural fitness for it, which enabled him to become a very successful lawyer and a wealthy landholder. It enabled him to build for himself one of the most beautiful and comfortable houses in this district, and to so improve his villages and lands that they are now worth many times their original value.

The next notable feature of his mind is his ability to reduce to a system everything he has to do or to have done for him. The management of his property and household resembles that of a department of Government, the routine work going on of itself, and every member of his family and servants having his own powers of decision and sanction, reference being made to him only on points determined beforehand as requiring his consideration. Even the Government practice of budgetting the receipts and expenditure of every year, and thereby regulating them, has been adopted by him in the management of his property.

Another feature of his mind is his thirst for knowledge. No day passes without his devoting some hours of it to reading. He does not care much for novels and other light literature, but most new books on moral and religious subjects will be found upon his table, and whatever he reads he marks and deeply ponders upon so as to make it of use to him in shaping his life and conduct. He greatly delights in studying Hindu religious and mystic philosophy, and in discovering evidence in them of the truth and all comprehensiveness of Christianity.

A fourth feature of his mind is his love of beauty in nature and art. During his residence at Kodaikanal or Courtallam, he would daily take long walks or drives to see beautiful avenues and striking landscapes. In his house at Courtallam, he would sit in a place from which he could see the waterfalls and the scenery around them, delighting in the sight for hours together. He acts on the principle that man should fully utilize all the innocent sources of enjoyment, provided by God for him on earth.

He delights in flowers, scents and music and sees that they are made available for his daily use and gratification. In short, he makes his life as comfortable and pleasant as possible without ostentation or extravagance. He has stated hours of business, friendly visits and religious discussion, with a view to the propagation of Christianity and never allows any violation of his rules in this respect, except perhaps sometimes in favour of religious discussion.

By nature he was proud, imperious and hot-tempered, traits which he inherited from his father. I shall mention a single incident to show the truth of this remark. Soon after his baptism at Madras, he was invited to the house of an Indian Christian gentleman of high position in that city. When his breakfast was being served, he found that something, which he thought ought to have been furnished, was wanting and, pushing away his dish, got up without tasting anything. When I heard of this incident at the time, I could hardly believe it. He was then a penniless young man. He had cut himself off from his Hindu relations and friends and was entirely dependant upon his Christian friends for every help and for his future advancement, and yet, in his sudden anger, he forgot all these things. But I must add that he has made it his daily endeavour to rid himself of these foibles as he always considered them, so that he can now say that, for many years past, he has not given way to a single angry word or deed.

Of his general character, it need only be said that it has been what might be expected of a sincere follower of Christ, his Divine Master. But there are one or two outstanding features which require to be specially noticed. One is his punctiliousness in the performance of all social duties. He seldom fails to return the visit of a friend. Whenever he returns to his home, after an absence of some months, he makes it a point to call upon all his friends, or such of them at least as he thinks would be glad to see him again. He delights in inviting his friends to dinners, At Homes, or tea parties in his house and gladly accepts such invitations from others. The Indian Christians of Palamcottah as a rule respond to such invitations with

reluctance and ignore the opportunities which arise in their own houses for such social intercourse, except in connection with marriages and funerals. They would seem to be afraid to commit themselves to customs which they think must entail trouble and expense. Mr. A. S. Appaswamy Pillai has often tried to bring about pleasanter social relations between the members of his community, but without success.

Another prominent feature of his character is his benevolence. No applicant for monetary help ever retired from his doors empty-handed but also satisfied beyond his most sanguine expectations. Many poor men and women are in receipt of fixed monthly or annual doles from him. Even people who are not poor, if in urgent need of money, can always depend upon him for loans, which he of his own accord converts unto gifts if he thinks repayment would be difficult. Many young converts to Christianity have lived in his house for years, until they became able to support themselves, or have been in receipt of monthly allowances from him. I need hardly add that he gives liberally to institutions and societies intended for the promotion of the good of the public. He truly deserves to be called a 'Vallal' (வள்ளல்), the title given in Tamil literature to the men celebrated for their liberality in Ancient India. But the lesson which his life teaches is that to be a true 'Vallal' one should be careful and strict in spending one's money in such ways as he does.

Coming now to his religious life, the first remark that suggests itself is that he believes that in fulfilment of the Lord's promise, 'Seek ye His Kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you.' His every step and every undertaking, since he became a Christian, have been directed and blessed by God. He is a strict observer of the Sabbath, and an exemplary Church-goer. He seldom fails to attend any meeting elsewhere in which the word of God is preached, either to Christians or Hindus and he is often asked to preside over such meetings. He devotes the freshest hour of every morning to private reading of the Bible and prayer and conducts family prayers

as regularly in the evenings. He takes great interest in the affairs of his Church, and is either a member or one of the chief office-bearers in every Council and Committee connected with it. But the most prominent feature of his religious life is his deep sense of his obligation ever to 'win other souls for Christ.' Ever since he retired from his profession, in his 53rd year, he has lived for this work which he does in all the following ways:—(1) he makes one or more preaching tours in the district every year; (2) he visits his Hindu friends in their houses, generally by appointment with them, with the express object of explaining to them the truths of Christianity. Where possible, he makes the friend to whose house he goes bring together as many of his neighbours as he can to hear him; (3) even during business, friendly or ceremonial visits he never neglects any opportunity to sow the word of God and, if the soil be suitable, he arranges for further interviews; (4) he welcomes to his house touring preachers of the Gospel and, by asking them to be his guests during their stay in the town, enables them to do their work without any distractions; (5) he is always ready to meet enquirers and clear up their doubts and difficulties; (6) he writes books in the Vernacular with such evidences and arguments in support of Christianity as will specially appeal to Hindus; (7) lastly, he gives liberally for missionary objects. He has built two churches: and he is the President of the Indian Missionary Society. His belief based, it would seem upon his own experience, is that even in these days, the Holy Ghost appears to the servants of God in a visible form, as He did to the Apostles in Jerusalem. He does not however speak of such experiences except to his intimate friends and even to them not unreservedly.

APPENDIX III

THE RECONCILIATION OF JUSTICE AND MERCY

For the benefit of my Hindu readers I append a brief outline of the doctrine in question. In God all good and holy attributes are found in their perfection. He is, therefore, perfectly just and perfectly merciful. Justice demands that He should vindicate the moral law by inflicting full and strict punishment for every violation thereof. Mercy demands that He should forgive and spare the penitent sinner who cries to Him for pardon.

These two attributes seem, therefore, to be contradictory to each other. But they were reconciled through the death of Jesus Christ. For, in order to satisfy the requirements of justice, God himself in the person of His Son became man, and taking man's place and paying man's debt, Himself suffered death upon the cross as a vindication of the moral law which man had broken, the Just One suffering for the unjust race, the Innocent offering Himself to save the guilty.

Justice having thus been satisfied, God is able to exercise mercy in its widest extent. When, therefore, the sinner wishes to give up sin and prays for pardon, looking to the death of Christ as the atonement for his sins, God is able on the basis of that atonement not only to pardon all his sins freely, but out of the super-abundance of His love and goodness to give that sinner all needful help to shake off the chains of bad habits and to live a new and blameless life and at last attain to heavenly bliss.

APPENDIX IV

MY DAILY ROUTINE OF PRAYER AND LIFE

1. Early in the morning I recite aloud about thirty of my favourite verses from the Bible. They are verses like these :—Psalms ciii. 1, 7 ; xxiii ; John xiv. 6 ; iii. 16.

2. Then I offer a prayer in this strain : 'To know Thee, the only true God and Thy Son Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent, is life eternal. Thy Commandments are life eternal. By Thy grace, enable Thou me to live with the one object and purpose of glorifying Thee and of doing good to others. Whether my death occurs to-day or Thy Second Coming takes place to-day, adorn Thou me with love, patience, peace, joy, long-suffering, self-restraint, hatred of sin, fulness of the Holy Ghost, readiness to do good to others and to take up the cross. As the perfect Divine nature dwells in Jesus Christ, grant that the perfect Divine nature may dwell in me also. Enable Thou me to walk in all ways according to Thy will. Help Thou me to do good in all things. Thou hast promised that Thou wilt renew all things ; create in me a new spirit. Grant that I may live like Jesus Christ. In His name, I ask it. Amen.'

3. After a short interval for breakfast, I read a chapter of the New Testament, following it up with the portion for the day from Spurgeon's *Morning by Morning*.

4. Then follows my prayer of communion, described in this book.

5. During my morning drive, I have another spell of the prayer of communion, this time out in the open air, gazing on natural scenery.

6. During my evening drive, I have another opportunity for the prayer of communion.

7. After the evening prayer, we have our family prayers.

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